THE LAST CHRONICLE OF BARSET

C.R.GRANT

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THE LAST CHRONICLE OF BARSET

BY

ANTHONY TROLLOPE

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THE LAST CHRONICLE OF BARSET.

CHAPTER I.

SHOWING WHAT MAJOR GRANTLY DID AFTER HIS WALK.

In going down from the church to the Small House Lily Dale had all the conversation to herself. During some portion of the way the path was only broad enough for two persons, and here Major Grantly walked by Lily's side, while Grace followed them. Then they found their way into the house, and Lily made her little speech to her mother about catching the major. "Yes, my dear, I have seen Major Grantly before," said Mrs. Dale. "I suppose he has met you on the road. But I did not expect that any of you would have returned so soon." Some little explanation followed as to the squire, and as to Major Grantly's walk, and after that the great thing was to leave the two lovers alone. "You will dine here, of course, Major Grantly," Mrs. Dale said. But this he declined. He had learned, he said, that there was a night-train up to London, and he thought that he would return to town

by that. He had intended, when he left London, to get back as soon as possible. Then Mrs. Dale, having hesitated for two or three seconds, got up and left the room, and Lily followed. "It seems very odd and abrupt," said Mrs. Dale to her daughter, "but I suppose it is best."

"Of course it is best, mamma. Do as one would be done by;—that 's the only rule. It will be much better for her that she should have it over."

Grace was seated on a sofa, and Major Grantly got up from his chair, and came and stood opposite to her. "Grace," he said, "I hope you are not angry with me for coming down to see you here."

"No, I am not angry," she said.

"I have thought a great deal about it, and your friend, Miss Prettyman, knew that I was coming. She quite approves of my coming."

"She has written to me, but did not tell me of it," said Grace, not knowing what other answer to make.

"No,—she could not have done that. She had no authority. I only mention her name because it will have weight with you, and because I have not done that which, under other circumstances, perhaps, I should have been bound to do. I have not seen your father."

"Poor papa," said Grace.

"I have felt that at the present moment I could not do so with any success. It has not come of any want of respect either for him or for you. Of course, Grace, you know why I am here?" He paused, and then, remembering that he had no right to expect an answer to such a question, he continued, "I have come here, dearest Grace, to ask you to be my wife, and to be a mother to Edith. I know that you love Edith."

"I do indeed."

"And I have hoped sometimes,—though I suppose I ought not to say so,—but I have hoped and almost thought sometimes, that you have been willing to—to love me, too. It is better to tell the truth simply, is it not?"

"I suppose so," said Grace.

"And therefore, and because I love you dearly myself, I have come to ask you to be my wife." Saying which, he opened out his hand, and held it to her. But she did not take it. "There is my hand, Grace. If your heart is as I would have it you can give me yours, and I shall want nothing else to make me happy." But still she made no motion towards granting him his request. "If I have been too sudden," he said, "you must forgive me for that. I have been sudden and abrupt, but as things are, no other way has been open to me. Can you not bring yourself to give me some answer, Grace?" His hand had now fallen again to his side, but he was still standing before her.

She had said no word to him as yet, except that one in which she had acknowledged her love for his child, and had expressed no surprise, even in her countenance, at his proposal. And yet the idea that he should do such a thing, since the idea that he certainly would do it had become clear to her, had filled her with a world of surprise. No girl ever lived with any beauty belonging to her who had a smaller knowledge of her own possession than Grace Crawley. Nor had she the slightest pride in her own acquirements. That she had been taught in many things more than had been taught to other girls, had come of her poverty and of the desolation of her home. She had learned to read Greek and

Italian because there had been nothing else for her to do in that sad house. And, subsequently, accuracy of knowledge had been necessary for the earning of her bread. I think that Grace had at times been weak enough to envy the idleness and almost to envy the ignorance of other girls. Her figure was light, perfect in symmetry, full of grace at all points; but she had thought nothing of her figure, remembering only the poverty of her dress, but remembering also with a brave resolution that she would never be ashamed of it. And as her acquaintance with Major Grantly had begun and had grown, and as she had learned to feel unconsciously that his company was pleasanter to her than that of any other person she knew, she had still told herself that anything like love must be out of the question. But then words had been spoken, and there had been glances in his eye, and a tone in his voice, and a touch upon his fingers, of which she could not altogether refuse to accept the meaning. And others had spoken to her of it, the two Miss Prettymans and her friend Lily. Yet she would not admit to herself that it could be so, and she would not allow herself to confess to herself that she loved him. Then had come the last killing misery to which her father had been subjected. He had been accused of stealing money, and had been committed to be tried for the theft. From that moment, at any rate, any hope, if there had been a hope, must be crushed. But she swore to herself bravely that there had been no such hope. And she assured herself also that nothing had passed which had entitled her to expect anything beyond ordinary friendship from the man of whom she certainly had thought much. Even if those touches and those tones

and those glances had meant anything, all such meaning must be annihilated by this disgrace which had come upon her. She might know that her father was innocent; she might be sure, at any rate, that he had been innocent in intention; but the world thought differently, and she, her brother and sister, and her mother and her poor father, must bend to the world's opinion. If those dangerous joys had meant anything, they must be taken as meaning nothing more.

Thus she had argued with herself, and fortified by such self-teachings, she had come down to Allington. Since she had been with her friends there had come upon her from day to day a clear conviction that her arguments had been undoubtedly true,—a clear conviction which had been very cold to her heart in spite of all her courage. She had expected nothing, hoped for nothing, and yet when nothing came she was sad. She thought of one special half-hour in which he had said almost all that he might have said,—more than he ought to have said;—of a moment during which her hand had remained in his; of a certain pressure with which he had put her shawl upon her shoulders. If he had only written to her one word to tell her that he believed her father was innocent! But no; she had no right to expect anything from him. And then Lily had ceased to talk of him, and she did expect nothing. Now he was there before her, asking her to come to him and be his wife. Yes; she would kiss his shoebuckles, only that the kissing of his shoebuckles would bring upon him that injury which he should never suffer from her hands! He had been generous, and her self-pride was satisfied. But her other pride was touched, and she also would be generous. "Can you not bring

yourself to give me some answer?" he had said to her. Of course she must give him an answer, but how should she give it?

"You are very kind," she said.

"I would be more than kind."

"So you are. Kind is a cold word when used to such a friend at such a time."

"I would be everything on earth to you that a man can be to a woman."

"I know I ought to thank you if I knew how. My heart is full of thanks. It is, indeed."

"And is there no room for love there?"

"There is no room for love in our house, Major Grantly. You have not seen papa?"

"No; but, if you wish it, I will do so at once."

"It would do no good,—none. I only asked you because you can hardly know how sad is our state at home."

"But I cannot see that that need deter you, if you can love me."

"Can you not? If you saw him, and the house, and my mother, you would not say so. In the Bible it is said of some season that it is not a time for marrying, or for giving in marriage. And so it is with us."

"I am not pressing you as to a day. I only ask you to say that you will be engaged to me,—so that I may tell my own people, and let it be known."

"I understand all that. I know how good you are. But, Major Grantly, you must understand me also when I assure you that it cannot be so."

"Do you mean that you refuse me altogether?"

"Yes; altogether."

"And why?"

"Must I answer that question? Ought I to be made to answer it? But I will tell you fairly, without touching on anything else, that I feel that we are all disgraced, and that I will not take disgrace into another family."

"Grace, do you love me?"

"I love no one now,—that is, as you mean. I can love no one. I have no room for any feeling except for my father and mother, and for us all. I should not be here now but that I save my mother the bread that I should eat at home."

"Is it as bad as that?"

"Yes, it is as bad as that. It is much worse than that, if you knew it all. You cannot conceive how low we have fallen. And now they tell me that my father will be found guilty, and will be sent to prison. Putting ourselves out of the question, what would you think of a girl who would engage herself to any man under such circumstances? What would you think of a girl who would allow herself to be in love in such a position? Had I been ten times engaged to you I would have broken it off." Then she got up to leave him.

But he stopped her, holding her by the arm. "What you have said will make me say what I certainly should never have said without it. I declare that we are engaged."

"No, we are not," said Grace.

"You have told me that you loved me."

"I never told you so."

"There are other ways of speaking than the voice; and I will boast to you, though to no one else, that

you have told me so. I believe you love me. I shall hold myself as engaged to you, and I shall think you false if I hear that you listen to another man. Now, good-bye, Grace;—my own Grace."

"No, I am not your own," she said, through her tears.

"You are my own, my very own. God bless you dear, dear, dearest Grace. You shall hear from me in a day or two, and shall see me as soon as this horrid trial is over." Then he took her in his arms before she could escape from him, and kissed her forehead and her lips, while she struggled in his arms. After that he left the room and the house as quickly as he could, and was seen no more of the Dales upon that occasion.

CHAPTER II.

SHOWING HOW MAJOR GRANTLY RETURNED TO GUESTWICK.

GRACE, when she was left alone, threw herself upon the sofa, and hid her face in her hands. She was weeping almost hysterically, and had been utterly dismayed and frightened by her lover's impetuosity. Things had gone after a fashion which her imagination had not painted to her as possible. Surely she had the power to refuse the man if she pleased. And yet she felt as she lay there weeping that she did in truth belong to him as part of his goods, and that her generosity had been foiled. She had especially resolved that she would not confess to any love for him. She had made no such confession. She had guarded herself against doing so with all the care which she knew how to use. But he had assumed the fact, and she had been unable to deny it. Could she have lied to him, and have sworn that she did not love him? Could she have so perjured herself, even in support of her generosity? Yes, she would have done so,—so she told herself,—if a moment had been given to her for thought. She ought to have done so, and she blamed herself for being so little prepared for the occasion. The lie would be useless now. Indeed, she would have no opportunity for telling it; for of course she

would not answer,—would not even read his letter. Though he might know that she loved him, yet she would not be his wife. He had forced her secret from her, but he could not force her to marry him. She did love him, but he should never be disgraced by her love.

After a while she was able to think of his conduct, and she believed that she ought to be very angry with him. He had taken her roughly in his arms, and had insulted her. He had forced a kiss from her. She had felt his arms warm and close and strong about her, and had not known whether she were in paradise or in purgatory. She was very angry with him. She would send back his letter to him without reading it,—without opening it, if that might be possible. He had done that to her which nothing could justify. But yet,—yet, —yet how dearly she loved him! Was he not a prince of men? He had behaved badly of course; but had any man ever behaved so badly before in so divine a way? Was it not a thousand pities that she should be driven to deny anything to a lover who so richly deserved everything that could be given to him? He had kissed her hand as he let her go, and now, not knowing what she did, she kissed the spot on which she had felt his lips. His arm had been round her waist, and the old frock which she wore should be kept by her for ever because it had been so graced.

What was she now to say to Lily and to Lily's mother? Of one thing there was no doubt. She would never tell them of her lover's wicked audacity. That was a secret never to be imparted to any ears. She would keep her resentment to herself, and not ask the protection of any vicarious wrath. He could never so sin again, that was certain; and she would keep all

knowledge and memory of the sin for her own purposes. But how could it be that such a man as that, one so good though so sinful, so glorious though so great a trespasser, should have come to such a girl as her and have asked for her love? Then she thought of her father's poverty and the misery of her own condition, and declared to herself that it was very wonderful.

Lily was the first to enter the room, and she, before she did so, learned from the servant that Major Grantly had left the house. "I heard the door, miss, and then I saw the top of his hat out of the pantry window." Armed with this certain information Lily entered the drawing-room, and found Grace in the act of rising from the sofa.

"Am I disturbing you?" said Lily.

"No; not at all. I am glad you have come. Kiss me, and be good to me." And she twined her arms about Lily and embraced her.

"Am I not always good to you, you simpleton? Has he been good?"

"I don't know what you mean."

"And have you been good to him?"

"As good as I knew how, Lily."

"And where is he?"

"He has gone away. I shall never see him any more, Lily." Then she hid her face upon her friend's shoulder and broke forth again into hysterical tears.

"But tell me, Grace, what he said;—that is, if you mean to tell me!"

"I will tell you everything;—that is, everything I can." And Grace blushed as she thought of the one secret which she certainly would not tell.

"Has he,—has he done what I said he would do? Come, speak out boldly. Has he asked you to be his wife?"

"Yes," said Grace, barely whispering the word.

"And you have accepted him?"

"No, Lily, I have not. Indeed, I have not. I did not know how to speak, because I was surprised;—and he, of course, could say what he liked. But I told him as well as I could, that I would not marry him."

"And why;—did you tell him why?"

"Yes; because of papa!"

"Then, if he is the man I take him to be, that answer will go for nothing. Of course he knew all that before he came here. He did not think you were an heiress with forty thousand pounds. If he is in earnest, that will go for nothing. And I think he is in earnest."

"And so was I in earnest."

"Well, Grace;—we shall see."

"I suppose I may have a will of my own, Lily."

"Do not be so sure of that. Women are not allowed to have wills of their own on all occasions. Some man comes in a girl's way, and she gets to be fond of him, just because he does come in her way. Well; when that has taken place, she has no alternative but to be taken if he chooses to take her; or to be left, if he chooses to leave her."

"Lily, don't say that."

"But I do say it. A man may assure himself that he will find for himself a wife who shall be learned, or beautiful, or six feet high, if he wishes it, or who has red hair, or red eyes, or red cheeks,—just what he pleases; and he may go about till he finds it, as you

can go about and match your worsteds. You are a fool if you buy a colour you don't want. But we can never match our worsteds for that other piece of work, but are obliged to take any colour that comes,—and therefore it is that we make such a jumble of it! Here 's mamma. We must not be philosophical before her. Mamma, Major Grantly has—skedaddled."

"Oh, Lily, what a word!"

"But, oh, mamma, what a thing! Fancy his going away and not saying a word to anybody!"

"If he had anything to say to Grace, I suppose he said it."

"He asked her to marry him, of course. We none of us had any doubt about that. He swore to her that she and none but she should be his wife,—and all that kind of thing. But he seems to have done it in the most prosaic way;—and now he has gone away without saying a word to any of us. I shall never speak to him again,—unless Grace asks me."

"Grace, my dear, may I congratulate you?" said Mrs. Dale.

Grace did not answer, as Lily was too quick for her. "Oh, she has refused him, of course. But Major Grantly is a man of too much sense to expect that he should succeed the first time. Let me see; this is the fourteenth. These clocks run fourteen days, and, therefore, you may expect him again about the twenty-eighth. For myself, I think you are giving him an immense deal of unnecessary trouble, and that if he left you in the lurch it would only serve you right; but you have the world with you, I 'm told. A girl is supposed to tell a man two fibs before she may tell him one truth."

"I told him no fib, Lily. I told him that I would not marry him, and I will not."

"But why not, dear Grace?" said Mrs. Dale.

"Because the people say that papa is a thief!" Having said this, Grace walked slowly out of the room, and neither Mrs. Dale nor Lily attempted to follow her.

"She 's as good as gold," said Lily, when the door was closed.

"And he;—what of him?"

"I think he is good, too; but she has told me nothing yet of what he has said to her. He must be good, or he would not have come down here after her. But I don't wonder at his coming, because she is so beautiful! Once or twice as we were walking back to-day, I thought her face was the most lovely that I had ever seen. And did you see her just now, as she spoke of her father?"

"Oh, yes;—I saw her."

"Think what she will be in two or three years' time, when she becomes a woman. She talks French, and Italian, and Hebrew for anything that I know; and she is perfectly beautiful. I never saw a more lovely figure;—and she has spirit enough for a goddess. I don't think that Major Grantly is such a fool after all."

"I never took him for a fool."

"I have no doubt all his own people do;—or they will, when they hear of it. But, mamma, she will grow to be big enough to walk atop of all the Lady Hartletops in England. It will all come right at last."

"You think it will?"

"Oh, yes. Why should it not? If he is worth having, it will;—and I think he is worth having. He

must wait till this horrid trial is over. It is clear to me that Grace thinks that her father will be convicted."

"But he cannot have taken the money."

"I think he took it, and I think it was n't his. But I don't think he stole it. I don't know whether you can understand the difference."

"I am afraid a jury won't understand it."

"A jury of men will not. I wish they could put you and me on it, mamma. I would take my best boots and eat them down to the heels, for Grace's sake,—and for Major Grantly's. What a good-looking man he is!"

"Yes, he is."

"And so like a gentleman! I 'll tell you what, mamma; we won't say anything to her about him for the present. Her heart will be so full she will be driven to talk, and we can comfort her better in that way." The mother and daughter agreed to act upon these tactics, and nothing more was said to Grace about her lover on that evening.

Major Grantly walked from Mrs. Dale's house to the inn and ordered his gig, and drove himself out of Allington, almost without remembering where he was or whither he was going. He was thinking solely of what had just occurred, and of what, on his part, should follow, as the result of that meeting. Half at least of the noble deeds done in this world are due to emulation, rather than to the native nobility of the actors. A young man leads a forlorn hope because another young man has offered to do so. Jones in the hunting-field rides at an impracticable fence because he is told that Smith took it three years ago. And Walker

puts his name down for ten guineas at a charitable dinner when he hears Thompson's read out for five. And in this case the generosity and self-denial shown by Grace warmed and cherished similar virtues within her lover's breast. Some few weeks ago Major Grantly had been in doubt as to what his duty required of him in reference to Grace Crawley; but he had no doubt whatsoever now. In the fervour of his admiration he would have gone straight to the archdeacon, had it been possible, and have told him what he had done and what he intended to do. Nothing now should stop him;—no consideration, that is, either as regarded money or position. He had pledged himself solemnly, and he was very glad that he had pledged himself. He would write to Grace and explain to her that he trusted altogether in her father's honour and innocence, but that no consideration as to that ought to influence either him or her in any way. If, independently of her father, she could bring herself to come to him, and be his wife, she was bound to do so now, let the position of her father be what it might. And thus, as he drove his gig back towards Guestwick, he composed a very pretty letter to the lady of his love.

And as he went, at the corner of the lane which led from the main road up to Guestwick Cottage, he again came upon John Eames, who was also returning to Guestwick. There had been a few words spoken between Lady Julia and Johnny respecting Major Grantly after the girls had left the cottage, and Johnny had been persuaded that the strange visitor to Allington could have no connection with his arch-enemy. "And why has he come to Allington?" John demanded, somewhat sternly, of his hostess.

"Well; if you ask me, I think he has gone there to see your cousin, Grace Crawley."

"He told me that he knew Grace," said John, looking as though he were conscious of his own ingenuity in putting two and two together very cleverly.

"Your cousin Grace is a very pretty girl," said Lady Julia.

"It 's a long time since I 've seen her," said Johnny.

"Why, you saw her just this minute," said Lady Julia.

"I did n't look at her," said Johnny. Therefore, when he again met Major Grantly, having continued to put two and two together with great ingenuity, he felt quite sure that the man had nothing to do with the arch-enemy, and he determined to be gracious. "Did you find them at home at Allington?" he said, raising his hat.

"How do you do again?" said the major. "Yes, I found your friend Mrs. Dale at home."

"But not her daughter, or my cousin? They were up there;—where I 've come from. But, perhaps, they had got back before you left."

"I saw them both. They found me on the road with Mr. Dale."

"What,—the squire? Then you have seen everybody?"

"Everybody I wished to see at Allington."

"But you would n't stay at the Red Lion?"

"Well, no. I remembered that I wanted to get back to London; and as I had seen my friends, I thought I might as well hurry away."

"You knew Mrs. Dale before, then?"

"No, I did n't. I never saw her in my life before.

But I knew the old squire when I was a boy. However, I should have said a friend. I went to see one friend, and I saw her."

John Eames perceived that his companion put a strong emphasis on the word "her," as though he were determined to declare boldly that he had gone to Allington solely to see Grace Crawley. He had not the slightest objection to recognising in Major Grantly a suitor for his cousin's hand. He could only reflect what an unusually fortunate girl Grace must be if such a thing could be true. Of those poor Crawleys he had only heard from time to time that their misfortunes were as numerous as the sands on the sea-shore, and as unsusceptible of any fixed and permanent arrangement. But, as regarded Grace, here would be a very permanent arrangement. Tidings had reached him that Grace was a great scholar, but he had never heard much of her beauty. It must probably be the case that Major Grantly was fond of Greek. There was, he reminded himself, no accounting for tastes; but as nothing could be more respectable than such an alliance, he thought that it would become him to be civil to the major.

"I hope you found her quite well. I had barely time to speak to her myself."

"Yes, she was very well. This is a sad thing about her father."

"Very sad," said Johnny. Perhaps the major had heard about the accusation for the first time to-day, and was going to find an escape on that plea. If such was the case, it would not be so well to be particularly civil.

"I believe Mr. Crawley is a cousin of yours?" said the major.

"His wife is my mother's first cousin. Their mothers were sisters."

"She is an excellent woman."

"I believe so. I don't know much about them myself,—that is, personally. Of course I have heard of this charge that has been made against him. It seems to me to be a great shame."

"Well, I can't exactly say that it is a shame. I do not know that there has been anything done with a feeling of persecution or of cruelty. It is a great mystery, and we must have it cleared up if we can."

"I don't suppose he can have been guilty," said Johnny.

"Certainly not in the ordinary sense of the word. I heard all the evidence against him."

"Oh, you did?"

"Yes," said the major. "I live near them in Barsetshire, and I am one of his bailmen."

"Then you are an old friend, I suppose?"

"Not exactly that; but circumstances make me very much interested about them. I fancy that the cheque was left in his house by accident, and that it got into his hands he did n't know how, and that when he used it he thought it was his."

"That 's queer," said Johnny.

"He is very odd, you know."

"But it 's a kind of oddity that they don't like at the assizes."

"The great cruelty is," said the major, "that whatever may be the result, the punishment will fall so heavily upon his wife and daughters. I think the whole county ought to come forward and take them

by the hand. Well, good-bye. I 'll drive on, as I am a little in a hurry."

"Good-bye," said Johnny. "I 'm very glad to have had the pleasure of meeting you." "He 's a good sort of fellow after all," he said to himself when the gig had passed on. "He would n't have talked in that way if he had meant to hang back."

CHAPTER III.

MR. TOOGOOD.

Mr. Crawley had declared to Mr. Robarts that he would summon no legal aid to his assistance at the coming trial. The reader may, perhaps, remember the impetuosity with which he rejected the advice on this subject which was conveyed to him by Mr. Robarts with all the authority of Archdeacon Grantly's name. "Tell the archdeacon," he had said, "that I will have none of his advice." And then Mr. Robarts had left him, fully convinced that any further interference on his part could be of no avail. Nevertheless, the words which had then been spoken were not without effect. This coming trial was ever present to Mr. Crawley's mind, and though, when driven to discuss the subject, he would speak of it with high spirit, as he had done both to the bishop and to Mr. Robarts, yet in his long hours of privacy, or when alone with his wife, his spirit was anything but high. "It will kill me," he would say to her. "I shall get salvation thus. Death will relieve me, and I shall never be called upon to stand before those cruel eager eyes." Then would she try to say words of comfort, sometimes soothing him as though he were a child, and at others bidding him be a man, and remember that as a man he should have sufficient endurance to bear the eyes of any crowd that might be there to look at him.

"I think I will go up to London," he said to her one evening, very soon after the day of Mr. Robarts's visit.

"Go up to London, Josiah!" Mr. Crawley had not been up to London once since they had been settled at Hogglestock, and this sudden resolution on his part frightened his wife. "Go up to London, dearest! and why?"

"I will tell you why. They all say that I should speak to some man of the law whom I may trust about this coming trial. I trust no one in these parts. Not, mark you, that I say that they are untrustworthy. God forbid that I should so speak or even so think of men whom I know not. But the matter has become so common in men's mouths at Barchester and at Silverbridge, that I cannot endure to go among them and to talk of it. I will go up to London, and I will see your cousin, Mr. John Toogood, of Gray's Inn." Now in this scheme there was an amount of everyday prudence which startled Mrs. Crawley almost as much as did the prospect of the difficulties to be overcome if the journey were to be made. Her husband, in the first place, had never once seen Mr. John Toogood; and in days very long back, when he and she were making their first gallant struggle,—for in those days it had been gallant,—down in their Cornish curacy,—he had reprobated certain Toogood civilities,—professional civilities,—which had been proffered, perhaps, with too plain an intimation that on the score of relationship the professional work should be done without payment. The Mr. Toogood of those days, who had been Mrs. Crawley's uncle, and the father of Mrs. Eames, and grandfather of our friend Johnny Eames, had been much angered by some correspondence which

had grown up between him and Mr. Crawley, and from that day there had been a cessation of all intercourse between the families. Since those days that Toogood had been gathered to the ancient Toogoods of old, and the son reigned on the family throne in Raymond's Buildings. The present Toogood was therefore first cousin to Mrs. Crawley. But there had been no intimacy between them. Mrs. Crawley had not seen her cousin since her marriage,—as indeed she had seen none of her relations, having been estranged from them by the singular bearing of her husband. She knew that her cousin stood high in his profession, the firm of Toogood and Crump,—Crump and Toogood it should have been properly called in these days,—having always held its head up high above all dirty work; and she felt that her husband could look for advice from no better source. But how would such a one as he manage to tell his story to a stranger? Nay, how would he find his way alone into the lawyer's room, to tell his story at all,—so strange was he to the world? And then the expense! "If you do not wish me to apply to your cousin, say so, and there shall be an end of it," said Mr. Crawley, in an angry tone.

"Of course I would wish it. I believe him to be an excellent man, and a good lawyer."

"Then why should I not go to his chambers? *In formâ pauperis* I must go to him, and must tell him so. I cannot pay him for the labour of his counsel, nor for such minutes of his time as I shall use."

"Oh, Josiah, you need not speak of that."

"But I must speak of it. Can I go to a professional man, who keeps as it were his shop open for those who may think fit to come, and purchase of him, and take

of his goods, and afterwards, when the goods have been used, tell him that I have not the price in my hand? I will not do that, Mary. You think that I am mad; that I know not what I do. Yes,—I see it in your eyes; and you are sometimes partly right. But I am not so mad but that I know what is honest. I will tell your cousin that I am sore straitened, and brought down into the very dust by misfortune. And I will beseech him, for what of ancient feeling of family he may bear to you, to listen to me for a while. And I will be very short, and, if need be, will bide his time patiently, and perhaps he may say a word to me that may be of use."

There was certainly very much in this to provoke Mrs. Crawley. It was not only that she knew well that her cousin would give ample and immediate attention, and lend himself thoroughly to the matter without any idea of payment,—but that she could not quite believe that her husband's humility was true humility. She strove to believe it, but knew that she failed. After all it was only a feeling on her part. There was no argument within herself about it. An unpleasant taste came across the palate of her mind, as such a savour will sometimes, from some unexpected source, come across the palate of the mouth. Well; she could only gulp at it, and swallow it and excuse it. Among the salad that comes from your garden a bitter leaf will now and then make its way into your salad bowl! Alas, there were so many bitter leaves ever making their way into her bowl! "What I mean is, Josiah, that no long explanation will be needed. I think, from what I remember of him, that he would do for us anything that he could do."

"Then I will go to the man, and will humble myself before him. Even that, hard as it is to me, may be a duty that I owe." Mr. Crawley as he said this was remembering the fact that he was a clergyman of the Church of England, and that he had a rank of his own in the country, which, did he ever do such a thing as go out to dinner in company, would establish for him a certain right of precedence; whereas this attorney, of whom he was speaking, was, so to say, nobody in the eyes of the world.

"There need be no humbling, Josiah, other than that which is due from man to man in all circumstances. But never mind; we will not talk about that. If it seems good to you, go to Mr. Toogood. I think that it is good. May I write to him and say that you will go?"

"I will write myself; it will be more seemly."

Then the wife paused before she asked the next question,—paused for some minute or two, and then asked it with anxious doubt,—"And may I go with you, Josiah?"

"Why should two go when one can do the work?" he answered sharply. "Have we money so much at command?"

"Indeed, no."

"You should go and do it all, for you are wiser in these things than I am, were it not that I may not dare to show—that I submit myself to my wife."

"Nay, my dear!"

"But it is ay, my dear. It is so. This is a thing such as men do; not such as women do, unless they be forlorn and unaided of men. I know that I am weak where you are strong; that I am crazed where you are clear-witted."

"I meant not that, Josiah. It was of your health that I thought."

"Nevertheless it is as I say. But, for all that, it may not be that you should do my work. There are those watching me who would say, 'Lo! he confesses himself incapable.' And then some one would whisper something of a madhouse. Mary, after all I fear that worse than a prison."

"May God in His mercy forbid such cruelty!"

"But I must look to it, my dear. Do you think that that woman, who sits there at Barchester in high places, disgracing herself and that puny ecclesiastical lord who is her husband,—do you think that she would not immure me if she could? She is a she-wolf,—only less reasonable than the dumb brute as she sharpens her teeth in malice coming from anger, and not in malice coming from hunger as do the outer wolves of the forest. I tell you, Mary, that if she had a colourable ground for her action, she would swear to-morrow that I am mad."

"You shall go alone to London."

"Yes, I will go alone. They shall not say that I cannot yet do my own work as a man should do it. I stood up before him, the puny man who is called a bishop, and before her who makes herself great by his littleness, and I scorned them both to their faces. Though the shoes which I had on were all broken, as I myself could not but see when I stood, yet I was greater than they were with all their purple and fine linen."

"But, Josiah, my cousin will not be harsh to you."

"Well,—and if he be not?"

"Ill-usage you can bear; and violent ill-usage, such

as that which Mrs. Proudie allowed herself to exhibit, you can repay with interest; but kindness seems to be too heavy a burden for you."

"I will struggle. I will endeavour. I will speak but little, and, if possible, I will listen much. Now, my dear, I will write to this man, and you shall give me the address that is proper for him." Then he wrote the letter, not accepting a word in the way of dictation from his wife, but "craving the great kindness of a short interview, for which he ventured to become a solicitor, urged thereto by his wife's assurance that one with whom he was connected by family ties would do as much as this for the possible preservation of the honour of the family." In answer to this, Mr. Toogood wrote back as follows:—

"Dear Mr. Crawley,—I will be at my office all Thursday morning next from ten to two, and will take care that you shan't be kept waiting for me above ten minutes. You parsons never like waiting. But had n't you better come and breakfast with me and Maria at nine? Then we 'd have a talk as we walk to the office.

"Yours always,

"THOMAS TOOGOOD."

And the letter was dated from the attorney's private house in Tavistock Square.

"I am sure he means to be kind," said Mrs. Crawley.

"Doubtless he means to be kind. But his kindness is rough;—I will not say unmannerly, as the word would be harsh. I have never even seen the lady whom he calls Maria."

"She is his wife!"

"So I would venture to suppose; but she is unknown to me. I will write again, and thank him, and say that I will be with him at ten to the moment."

There were still many things to be settled before the journey could be made. Mr. Crawley, in his first plan, proposed that he should go up by night mail train, travelling in the third class, having walked over to Silverbridge to meet it; that he should then walk about London from 5 A.M. to 10 A.M., and afterwards come down by an afternoon train to which a third class was also attached. But at last his wife persuaded him that such a task as that, performed in the middle of the winter, would be enough to kill any man, and that, if attempted, it would certainly kill him; and he consented at last to sleep the night in town,—being specially moved thereto by discovering that he could, in conformity with this scheme, get in and out of the train at a station considerably nearer to him than Silverbridge, and that he could get a ticket at a third class fare. The whole journey, he found, could be done for a pound, allowing him seven shillings for his night's expenses in London; and out of the resources of the family there were produced two sovereigns, so that in the event of accident he would not utterly be a castaway from want of funds.

So he started on his journey after an early dinner, almost hopeful through the new excitement of a journey to London, and his wife walked with him nearly as far as the station. "Do not reject my cousin's kindness," were the last words she spoke.

"For his professional kindness, if he will extend it to me, I will be most thankful," he replied. She did

not dare to say more; nor had she dared to write privately to her cousin, asking for any special help, lest by doing so she should seem to impugn the sufficiency and stability of her husband's judgment. He got up to town late at night, and having made inquiry of one of the porters, he hired a bed for himself in the neighbourhood of the railway station. Here he had a cup of tea and a morsel of bread-and-butter, and in the morning he breakfasted again on the same fare. "No, I have no luggage," he had said to the girl at the public-house, who had asked him as to his travelling gear. "If luggage be needed as a certificate of respectability, I will pass on elsewhere," said he. The girl stared, and assured him that she did not doubt his respectability. "I am a clergyman of the Church of England," he had said, "but my circumstances prevent me from seeking a more expensive lodging." They did their best to make him comfortable, and, I think, almost disappointed him in not heaping further misfortunes on his head.

He was in Raymond's Buildings at half-past nine, and for half an hour walked up and down the umbrageous pavement,—it used to be umbrageous, but perhaps the trees have gone now,—before the doors of the various chambers. He could hear the clock strike from Gray's Inn; and the moment that it had struck he was turning in, but was encountered in the passage by Mr. Toogood, who was equally punctual with himself. Strange stories about Mr. Crawley had reached Mr. Toogood's household, and that Maria, the mention of whose Christian name had been so offensive to the clergyman, had begged her husband not to be a moment late. Poor Mr. Toogood, who on ordinary days

did perhaps take a few minutes' grace, was thus hurried away almost with his breakfast in his throat, and, as we have seen, just saved himself. "Perhaps, sir, you are Mr. Crawley?" he said, in a good-humoured, cheery voice. He was a good-humoured, cheery-looking man, about fifty years of age, with grizzled hair and sunburnt face, and large whiskers. Nobody would have taken him to be a partner in any of those great houses of which we have read in history,—the Quirk, Gammon and Snaps of the profession, or the Dodson and Foggs, who are immortal.

"That is my name, sir," said Mr. Crawley, taking off his hat and bowing low, "and I am here by appointment to meet Mr. Toogood, the solicitor, whose name I see affixed upon the door-post."

"I am Mr. Toogood, the solicitor, and I hope I see you quite well, Mr. Crawley." Then the attorney shook hands with the clergyman and preceded him upstairs to the front room on the first floor. "Here we are, Mr. Crawley, and pray take a chair. I wish you could have made it convenient to come and see us at home. We are rather long, as my wife says,—long in family, she means, and therefore are not very well off for spare beds——"

"Oh, sir."

"I 've twelve of 'em living, Mr. Crawley,—from eighteen years, the eldest,—a girl, down to eighteen months, the youngest,—a boy, and they go in and out, boy and girl, boy and girl, like the cogs of a wheel. They ain't such far away distant cousins from your own young ones—only first, once, as we call it."

"I am aware that there is a family tie, or I should not have ventured to trouble you."

"Blood is thicker than water; is n't it? I often say that. I heard of one of your girls only yesterday. She is staying somewhere down in the country, not far from where my sister lives,—Mrs. Eames, the widow of poor John Eames who never did any good in this world. I dare say you 've heard of her?"

"The name is familiar to me, Mr. Toogood."

"Of course it is. I 've a nephew down there just now, and he saw your girl the other day; very highly he spoke of her too. Let me see;—how many is it you have?"

"Three living, Mr. Toogood."

"I 've just four times three;—that 's the difference. But I comfort myself with the text about the quiver, you know; and I tell them that when they 've eat up all the butter, they 'll have to take their bread dry."

"I trust the young people take your teaching in a proper spirit."

"I don't know much about spirit. There 's spirit enough. My second girl, Lucy, told me that if I came home to-day without tickets for the pantomime I should n't have any dinner allowed me. That 's the way they treat me. But we understand each other at home. We are all pretty good friends there, thank God. And there is n't a sick chick among the boiling."

"You have many mercies for which you should indeed be thankful," said Mr. Crawley, gravely.

"Yes, yes, yes; that 's true. I think of that sometimes, though perhaps not so much as I ought to do. But the best way to be thankful is to use the goods the gods provide you.

> "'The lovely Thais sits beside you.
> Take the goods the gods provide you.'

I often say that to my wife, till the children have got to calling her Thais. The children have it pretty much their own way with us, Mr. Crawley."

By this time Mr. Crawley was almost beside himself, and was altogether at a loss how to bring in the matter on which he wished to speak. He had expected to find a man who in the hurry of London business might perhaps just manage to spare him five minutes,—who would grapple instantly with the subject that was to be discussed between them, would speak to him half-a-dozen hard words of wisdom, and would then dismiss him and turn on the instant to other matters of important business;—but here was an easy, familiar fellow, who seemed to have nothing on earth to do and at this first meeting had taken advantage of a distant family connection to tell him everything about the affairs of his own household. And then how peculiar were the domestic traits which he told! What was Mr. Crawley to say to a man who had taught his own children to call their mother Thais? Of Thais Mr. Crawley did know something, and he forgot to remember that perhaps Mr. Toogood knew less. He felt it, however, to be very difficult to submit the details of his case to a gentleman who talked in such a strain about his own wife and children.

But something must be done. Mr. Crawley, in his present frame of mind, could not sit and talk about Thais all day. "Sir," he said, "the picture of your home is very pleasant, and I presume that plenty abounds there."

"Well, you know, pretty toll-loll for that. With twelve of 'em, Mr. Crawley, I need n't tell you they are not all going to have castles and parks of their

own, unless they can get 'em off their own bats. But I pay upwards of a hundred a year each for my eldest three boys' schooling, and I 've been paying eighty for the girls'. Put that and that together and see what it comes to. Educate, educate, educate; that 's my word."

"No better word can be spoken, sir."

"I don't think there 's a girl in Tavistock Square that can beat Polly,—she 's the eldest, called after her mother, you know;—that can beat her at the piano. And Lucy has read Lord Byron and Tom Moore all through, every word of 'em. By Jove I believe she knows most of Tom Moore by heart. And the young 'uns are coming on just as well."

"Perhaps, sir, as your time is, no doubt, precious——"

"Just at this time of the day we don't care so much about it, Mr. Crawley; and one does n't catch a new cousin every day, you know."

"However, if you will allow me——"

"We 'll tackle to? Very well; so be it. Now, Mr. Crawley, let me hear what it is that I can do for you." Of a sudden, as Mr. Toogood spoke these last words, the whole tone of his voice seemed to change, and even the position of his body became so much altered as to indicate a different kind of man. "You just tell your story in your own way, and I won't interrupt you till you 've done. That 's always the best."

"I must first crave your attention to an unfortunate preliminary," said Mr. Crawley.

"And what is that?"

"I come before you *in formâ pauperis*." Here Mr. Crawley paused and stood up before the attorney with

his hands crossed one upon the other, bending low, as though calling attention to the poorness of his raiment. "I know that I have no justification for my conduct. I have nothing of reason to offer why I should trespass upon your time. I am a poor man, and cannot pay you for your services."

"Oh, bother!" said Mr. Toogood, jumping up out of his chair.

"I do not know whether your charity will grant me that which I ask——"

"Don't let 's have any more of this," said the attorney. "We none of us like this kind of thing at all. If I can be of any service to you, you 're as welcome to it as flowers in May; and as for billing my first cousin, which your wife is, I should as soon think of sending in an account to my own."

"But, Mr. Toogood——"

"Do you go on now with your story; I 'll put the rest all right."

"I was bound to be explicit, Mr. Toogood."

"Very well; now you have been explicit with a vengeance, and you may heave ahead. Let 's hear the story, and if I can help you I will. When I 've said that, you may be sure I mean it. I 've heard something of it before, but let me hear it all from you."

Then Mr. Crawley began and told the story. Mr. Toogood was actually true to his promise, and let the narrator go on with his narrative without interruption. When Mr. Crawley came to his own statement that the cheque had been paid to him by Mr. Soames, and went on to say that that statement had been false,—"I told him that, but I told him so wrongly,"—and then paused, thinking that the lawyer would ask some

question, Mr. Toogood simply said, "Go on; go on. I 'll come back to all that when you 've done." And he merely nodded his head when Mr. Crawley spoke of his second statement, that the money had come from the dean. "We had been bound together by close ties of early familiarity," said Mr. Crawley, "and in former years our estates in life were the same. But he has prospered and I have failed. And when creditors were importunate, I consented to accept relief in money, which had previously been often offered. And I must acknowledge, Mr. Toogood, while saying this, that I have known,—have known with heartfelt agony,—that at former times my wife has taken that from my friend Mr. Arabin with hand half-hidden from me, which I have refused. Whether it be better to eat—the bread of charity,—or not to eat bread at all, I, for myself, have no doubt," he said; "but when the want strikes one's wife and children, and the charity strikes only one's self, then there is a doubt." When he spoke thus, Mr. Toogood got up, and thrusting his hands into his waistcoat pockets walked about the room, exclaiming, "By George, by George, by George!" But he still let the man go on with his story, and heard him out at last to the end.

"And they committed you for trial at the next Barchester assizes?" said the lawyer.

"They did."

"And you employed no lawyer before the magistrates?"

"None;—I refused to employ any one."

"You were wrong there, Mr. Crawley. I must be allowed to say that you were wrong there."

"I may possibly have been so from your point of

view, Mr. Toogood; but permit me to explain. I ——"

"It 's no good explaining now. Of course you must employ a lawyer for your defence,—an attorney who will put the case into the hands of counsel."

"But that I cannot do, Mr. Toogood."

"You must do it. If you don't do it, your friends should do it for you. If you don't do it, everybody will say you 're mad. There is n't a single solicitor you could find within half a mile of you at this moment who would n't give you the same advice,—not a single man either, who has got a head on his shoulders worth a turnip."

When Mr. Crawley was told that madness would be laid to his charge if he did not do as he was bid, his face became very black, and assumed something of that look of determined obstinacy which it had worn when he was standing in the presence of the bishop and Mrs. Proudie. "It may be so," he said. "It may be as you say, Mr. Toogood. But these neighbours of yours, as to whose collected wisdom you speak with so much certainty, would hardly recommend me to indulge in a luxury for which I have no means of paying."

"Who thinks about paying under such circumstances as these?"

"I do, Mr. Toogood."

"The wretchedest costermonger that comes to grief has a barrister in a wig and gown to give him his chance of escape."

"But I am not a costermonger, Mr. Toogood,—though more wretched perhaps than any costermonger now in existence. It is my lot to have to endure the

sufferings of poverty, and at the same time not to be exempt from those feelings of honour to which poverty is seldom subject. I cannot afford to call in legal assistance for which I cannot pay,—and I will not do it."

"I 'll carry the case through for you. It certainly is not just my line of business,—but I 'll see it carried through for you."

'Out of your own pocket?"

"Never mind; when I say I 'll do a thing, I 'll do it."

"No, Mr. Toogood; this thing you cannot do. But do not suppose I am the less grateful."

"What is it I can do then? Why do you come to me if you won't take my advice?"

After this the conversation went on for a considerable time without touching on any point which need be brought palpably before the reader's eye. The attorney continued to beg the clergyman to have his case managed in the usual way, and went so far as to tell him that he would be ill-treating his wife and family if he continued to be obstinate. But the clergyman was not shaken from his resolve, and was at last able to ask Mr. Toogood what he had better do,—how he had better attempt to defend himself,—on the understanding that no legal aid was to be employed. When this question was at last asked in such a way as to demand an answer, Mr. Toogood sat for a moment or two in silence. He felt that an answer was not only demanded, but almost enforced; and yet there might be much difficulty in giving it.

"Mr. Toogood," said Mr. Crawley, seeing the attorney's hesitation, "I declare to you before God, that my only object will be to enable the jury to know

about this sad matter all that I know myself. If I could open my breast to them I should be satisfied. But then a prisoner can say nothing; and what he does say is ever accounted false."

"That is why you should have legal assistance."

"We have already come to a conclusion on that matter, as I thought," said Mr. Crawley.

Mr. Toogood paused for another moment or two, and then dashed at his answer; or rather, dashed at a counter-question. "Mr. Crawley, where did you get the cheque? You must pardon me, you know; or, if you wish it, I will not press the question. But so much hangs on that, you know."

"Everything would hang on it,—if I only knew."

"You mean that you forget?"

"Absolutely; totally. I wish, Mr. Toogood, I could explain to you the toilsome perseverance with which I have cudgelled my poor brains, endeavouring to extract from them some scintilla of memory that would aid me."

"Could you have picked it up in the house?"

"No;—no; that I did not do. Dull as I am, I know so much. It was mine of right, from whatever source it came to me. I know myself as no one else can know me, in spite of the wise man's motto. Had I picked up a cheque in my house, or on the road, I should not have slept till I had taken steps to restore it to the seeming owner. So much I can say. But, otherwise, I am in such matters so shandy-pated, that I can trust myself to be sure of nothing. I thought; —I certainly thought——"

"You thought what?"

"I thought that it had been given to me by my

friend the dean. I remember well that I was in his library at Barchester and I was somewhat provoked in spirit. There were lying on the floor hundreds of volumes, all glittering with gold, and reeking with new leather from the binder's. He asked me to look at his toys. Why should I look at them? There was a time, but the other day it seemed, when he had been glad to borrow from me such treasures as I had. And it seemed to me that he was heartless in showing me these things. Well; I need not trouble you with all that."

"Go on;—go on. Let me hear it all, and I shall learn something."

"I know now how vain, how vile I was. I always know afterwards how low the spirit has grovelled. I had gone to him then because I had resolved to humble myself, and, for my wife's sake, to ask my friend—for money. With words which were very awkward,—which no doubt were ungracious,—I had asked him, and he had bid me follow him from his hall into his library. There he left me awhile, and on returning told me with a smile that he had sent for money,—and, if I can remember, the sum he named was fifty pounds."

"But it has turned out, as you say, that you have paid fifty pounds with his money,—besides the cheque."

"That is true;—that is quite true. There is no doubt of that. But as I was saying,—then he fell to talking about the books, and I was angered. I was very sore in my heart. From the moment in which the words of beggary had passed from my lips, I had repented. And he had laughed and had taken it gaily. I turned upon him and told him that I had changed

my mind. I was grateful, but I would not have his money. And so I prepared to go. But he argued with me, and would not let me go,—telling me of my wife and of my children, and while he argued there came a knock at the door, and something was handed in, and I knew that it was the hand of his wife."

"It was the money, I suppose?"

"Yes, Mr. Toogood; it was the money. And I became the more uneasy, because she herself is rich. I liked it the less because it seemed to come from her hand. But I took it. What could I do when he reminded me that I could not keep my parish unless certain sums were paid? He gave me a little parcel in a cover, and I took it,—and left him sorrowing. I had never before come quite to that;—though, indeed, it had in fact been often so before. What was the difference whether the alms were given into my hands or into my wife's?"

"You are too touchy about it all, Mr. Crawley."

"Of course I am. Do you try it, and see whether you will be touchy. You have worked hard at your profession, I dare say."

"Well, yes; pretty well. To tell the truth, I have worked hard. By George, yes! It 's not so bad now as it used to be."

"But you have always earned your bread; bread for yourself, and bread for your wife and little ones. You can buy tickets for the play."

"I could n't always buy tickets, mind you."

"I have worked as hard, and yet I cannot get bread. I am older than you, and I cannot earn my bare bread. Look at my clothes. If you had to go and beg from Mr. Crump, would not you be touchy?"

"As it happens Crump is n't so well off as I am."

"Never mind. But I took it, and went home, and for two days I did not look at it. And then there came an illness upon me, and I know not what passed. But two men who had been hard on me came to the house when I was out, and my wife was in a terrible state; and I gave her the money, and she went into Silverbridge and paid them."

"And this cheque was with what you gave her?"

"No; I gave her money in notes,—just fifty pounds. When I gave it her, I thought I gave it all; and yet afterwards I thought I remembered that in my illness I had found the cheque with the dean's money. But it was not so."

"You are sure of that?"

"He said that he put five notes of ten pounds each into the cover, and such notes I certainly gave to my wife."

"Where then did you get the cheque?" Mr. Crawley again paused before he answered. "Surely, if you will exert your mind, you will remember," said the lawyer. "Where did you get the cheque?"

"I do not know."

Mr. Toogood threw himself back in his chair, took his knee up into his lap to nurse it, and began to think of it. He sat thinking of it for some minutes without a word,—perhaps for five minutes, though the time seemed to be much longer to Mr. Crawley, who was, however, determined that he would not interrupt him. And Mr. Toogood's thoughts were at variance with Mr. Toogood's former words. Perhaps, after all, this scheme of Mr. Crawley's,—or rather the mode of defence on which he had resolved without any scheme,

—might be the best of which the case admitted. It might be well that he should go into court without a lawyer. "He has convinced me of his innocence," Mr. Toogood said to himself, "and why should he not convince a jury? He has convinced me, not because I am specially soft, or because I love the man,—for as to that I dislike him rather than otherwise;—but because there is either real truth in his words, or else so well-feigned a show of truth that no jury can tell the difference. I think it is true. By George, I think he did get the twenty pounds honestly, and that he does not at this moment know where he got it. He may have put his finger into my eye; but, if so, why not also into the eyes of a jury?" Then he released his leg, and spoke something of his thoughts aloud. "It 's a sad story," he said; "a very sad story."

"Well, yes, it 's sad enough. If you could see my house, you 'd say so."

"I have n't a doubt but what you 're as innocent as I am." Mr. Toogood, as he said this, felt a little twinge of conscience. He did believe Mr. Crawley to be innocent, but he was not so sure of it as his words would seem to imply. Nevertheless he repeated the words again;—"as innocent as I am."

"I don't know," said Mr. Crawley. "I don't know. I think I am; but I don't know."

"I believe you are. But you see the case is a very distressing one. A jury has a right to say that the man in possession of a cheque for twenty pounds should account for his possession of it. If I understand the story aright, Mr. Soames will be able to prove that he brought the cheque into your house, and, as far as he knows, never took it out again."

"I suppose so; all the same, if he brought it in, then did he also take it out again."

"I am saying what he will prove,—or, in other words, what he will state upon oath. You can't contradict him. You can't get into the box to do it,—even if that would be of any avail; and I am glad that you cannot, as it would be of no avail. And you can put no one else into the box who can do so."

"No; no."

"That is to say, we think you cannot do so. People can do so many things that they don't think they can do; and can't do so many things that they think they can do! When will the dean be home?"

"I don't know."

"Before the trial?"

"I don't know. I have no idea."

"It 's almost a toss-up whether he 'd do more harm or good if he were there."

"I wish he might be there if he has anything to say, whether it might be for harm or good."

"And Mrs. Arabin;—she is with him?"

"They tell me she is not. She is in Europe. He is in Palestine."

"In Palestine, is he?"

"So they tell me. A dean can go where he likes. He has no cure of souls to stand in the way of his pleasures."

"He has n't,—has n't he? I wish I were a dean; that is, if I were not a lawyer. Might I write a line to the dean,—and to Mrs. Dean, if it seemed fit? You would n't mind that? As you have come to see your cousin at last,—and very glad I am that you have,—you must leave him a little discretion. I won't say any-

thing I ought n't to say." Mr. Crawley opposed this scheme for some time, but at last consented to the proposition. "And I 'll tell you what, Mr. Crawley; I am very fond of cathedrals, I am indeed; and I have long wanted to see Barchester. There 's a very fine what-you-may-call-'em; is n't there? Well; I 'll just run down at the assizes. We have nothing to do in London when the judges are in the country,—of course." Mr. Toogood looked into Mr. Crawley's eyes as he said this, to see if his iniquity were detected, but the perpetual curate was altogether innocent in these matters. "Yes; I 'll just run down for a mouthful of fresh air. Of course I shan't open my mouth in court. But I might say one word to the dean, if he 's there;—and one word to Mr. Soames. Who is conducting the prosecution?" Mr. Crawley said that Mr. Walker was doing so. "Walker, Walker, Walker? of,—yes; Walker and Winthrop, is n't it? A decent sort of man, I suppose?"

"I have heard nothing to his discredit, Mr. Toogood."

"And that 's saying a great deal for a lawyer. Well, Mr. Crawley, if nothing else comes out between this and that,—nothing, that is, that shall clear your memory about that unfortunate bit of paper, you must simply tell your story to the jury as you 've told it to me. I don't think any twelve men in England would convict you;—I don't indeed."

"You think they would not?"

"Of course I 've only heard one side, Mr. Crawley."

"No,—no,—no, that is true."

"But judging as well as I can judge from one side I don't think a jury can convict you. At any rate

I 'll see you at Barchester, and I 'll write a line or two before the trial, just to find out anything that can be found out. And you 're sure you won't come and take a bit of mutton with us in the Square? The girls would be delighted to see you, and so would Maria." Mr. Crawley said that he was quite sure he could not do that, and then having tendered reiterated thanks to his new friend in words which were touching in spite of their old-fashioned gravity, he took his leave, and walked back again to the public-house at Paddington.

He returned home to Hogglestock on the same afternoon, reaching that place at nine in the evening. During the whole of the day after leaving Raymond's Buildings he was thinking of the lawyer and of the words which the lawyer had spoken. Although he had been disposed to quarrel with Mr. Toogood on many points, although he had been more than once disgusted by the attorney's bad taste, shocked by his low morality, and almost insulted by his easy familiarity, still, when the interview was over, he liked the attorney. When first Mr. Toogood had begun to talk, he regretted very much that he had subjected himself to the necessity of discussing his private affairs with such a wind-bag of a man; but when he left the chamber he trusted Mr. Toogood altogether, and was very glad that he had sought his aid. He was tired and exhausted when he reached home, as he had eaten nothing but a biscuit or two since his breakfast; but his wife got him food and tea, and then asked him as to his success. "Was my cousin kind to you?"

"Very kind,—more than kind,—perhaps somewhat too pressing in his kindness. But I find no fault. God

forbid that I should. He is, I think, a good man, and certainly has been good to me."

"And what is to be done?"

"He will write to the dean."

"I am glad of that."

"And he will be at Barchester."

"Thank God for that."

"But not as my lawyer."

"Nevertheless, I thank God that some one will be there who will know how to give you assistance and advice."

"But that was not the chiefest thing that he did for me," said Mr. Crawley. "He told me that he was convinced of my innocence."

CHAPTER IV.

THE PLUMSTEAD FOXES.

THE letters had been brought into the breakfast-parlour at Plumstead Rectory one morning, and the archdeacon had inspected them all, and then thrown over to his wife her share of the spoil,—as was the custom of the house. As to most of Mrs. Grantly's letters he never made any further inquiry. To letters from her sister, the dean's wife, he was profoundly indifferent, and rarely made any inquiry as to those which were directed in writing with which he was not familiar. But there were others as to which, as Mrs. Grantly knew, he would be sure to ask her questions if she did not show them. No note ever reached her from Lady Hartletop as to which he was not curious, and yet Lady Hartletop's notes very seldom contained much that was of interest. Now, on this morning, there came a letter which, as a matter of course, Mrs. Grantly read at breakfast, and which, she knew, would not be allowed to disappear without inquiry. Nor, indeed, did she wish to keep the letter from her husband. It was too important to be so treated. But she would have been glad to gain time to think in what spirit she would discuss the contents of the letter,—if only such time might be allowed to her. But the archdeacon would allow her no time. "What does Henry

say, my dear?" he asked, before the breakfast things had been taken away.

"What does he say? Well; he says—— I 'll give you his letter to read by-and-bye."

"And why not now?"

"I thought I 'd read it again myself, first."

"But if you have read it, I suppose you know what 's in it?"

"Not very clearly, as yet. However, there it is." She knew very well that when she had once been asked for it, no peace would be allowed to her till he had seen it. And, alas! there was not much probability of peace in the house for some time after he should see it.

The archdeacon read the three or four first lines in silence,—and then he burst out. "He has; has he? Then, by heavens——"

"Stop, dearest; stop," said his wife, rising from her chair and coming over to him; "do not say words which you will surely repent."

"I will say words which shall make him repent. He shall never have from me a son's portion."

"Do not make threats in anger. Do not! You know that it is wrong. If he has offended you, say nothing about it,—even to yourself,—as to threatened punishments, till you can judge of the offence in cool blood."

"I am cool," said the archdeacon.

"No, my dear; no; you are angry. And you have not even read his letter through."

"I will read his letter."

"You will see that the marriage is not imminent. It may be that even yet it will never take place. The young lady has refused him."

"Psha!"

"You will see that she has done so. He tells us so himself. And she has behaved very properly."

"Why has she refused him?"

"There can be no doubt about the reason. She feels that, with this charge hanging over her father, she is not in a position to become the wife of any gentleman. You cannot but respect her for that."

Then the archdeacon finished his son's letter, uttering sundry interjections and ejaculations as he did so. "Of course; I knew it. I understand it all," he said at last. "I 've nothing to do with the girl. I don't care whether she be good or bad."

"Oh, my dear!"

"I care not at all,—with reference to my own concerns. Of course I would wish that the daughter of a neighbouring clergyman,—that the daughter of any neighbour,—that the daughter of any one whatsoever,—should be good rather than bad. But as regards Henry and me, and our mutual relation, her goodness can make no difference. Let her be an angel, and still such a marriage must estrange him from me, and me from him."

"But she has refused him."

"Yes; and what does he say?—that he has told her that he will not accept her refusal. Of course we know what it all means. The girl I am not judging. The girl I will not judge. But my own son, to whom I have ever done a father's duty with a father's affectionate indulgence,—him I will judge. I have warned him, and he declares himself to be careless of my warning. I shall take no notice of this letter. I shall neither write to him about it, nor speak to him about

it. But I charge you to write to him, and tell him that if he does this thing he shall not have a child's portion from me. It is not that I will shorten that which would have been his; but he shall have—nothing!" Then having spoken these words with a solemnity which for the moment silenced his wife, he got up and left the room. He left the room and closed the door, but before he had gone half the length of the hall towards his own study, he returned and addressed his wife again. "You understand my instructions, I hope?"

"What instructions?"

"That you write to Henry and tell him what I say."

"I will speak again to you about it by-and-bye."

"I will speak no more about it,—not a word more. Let there be not a word more said, but oblige me by doing as I ask you."

Then he was again about to leave the room, but she stopped him. "Wait a moment, my dear."

"Why should I wait?"

"That you may listen to me. Surely you will do that, when I ask you. I will write to Henry, of course, if you bid me; and I will give him your message, whatever it may be; but not to-day, my dear."

"Why not to-day?"

"Because the sun shall go down upon your wrath before I become its messenger. If you choose to write to-day yourself, I cannot help it. I cannot hinder you. If I am to write to him on your behalf I will take my instructions from you to-morrow morning. When to morrow morning comes you will not be angry with me because of the delay."

The archdeacon was by no means satisfied; but he

knew his wife too well, and himself too well, and the world too well, to insist on the immediate gratification of his passion. Over his bosom's mistress he did exercise a certain marital control,—which was, for instance, quite sufficiently fixed to enable him to look down with thorough contempt on such a one as Bishop Proudie; but he was not a despot who could exact a passive obedience to every fantasy. His wife would not have written the letter for him on that day, and he knew very well that she would not do so. He knew also that she was right;—and yet he regretted his want of power. His anger at the present moment was very hot,—so hot that he wished to wreak it. He knew that he would cool before the morrow;—and, no doubt, knew also theoretically, that it would be most fitting that it should cool. But not the less was it a matter of regret to him that so much good hot anger should be wasted, and that he could not have his will of his disobedient son while it lasted. He might, no doubt, have written himself, but to have done so would not have suited him. Even in his anger he could not have written to his son without using the ordinary terms of affection, and in his anger he could not bring himself to use those terms. "You will find that I shall be of the same mind to-morrow,—exactly," he said to his wife. "I have resolved about it long since; and it is not likely that I shall change in a day." Then he went out, about his parish, intending to continue to think of his son's iniquity, so that he might keep his anger hot,—red-hot. Then he remembered that the evening would come, and that he would say his prayers; and he shook his head in regret,—in a regret of which he was only half conscious, though it was very keen, and which he did

not attempt to analyse,—as he reflected that his rage would hardly be able to survive that ordeal. How common with us it is to repine that the devil is not stronger over us than he is.

The archdeacon, who was a very wealthy man, had purchased a property in Plumstead, contiguous to the glebe-land, and had thus come to exercise in the parish the double duty of rector and squire. And of this estate in Barsetshire, which extended beyond the confines of Plumstead into the neighbouring parish of Eiderdown, and which comprised also an outlying farm in the parish of Stogpingum,—Stoke Pinguium would have been the proper name had not barbarous Saxon tongues clipped it of its proper proportions,—he had always intended that his son Charles should enjoy the inheritance. There was other property, both in land and in money, for his elder son, and other again for the maintenance of his wife,—for the archdeacon's father had been for many years Bishop of Barchester, and such a bishopric as that of Barchester had been in those days worth money. Of his intention in this respect he had never spoken in plain language to either of his sons; but the major had for the last year or two enjoyed the shooting of the Barsetshire covers, giving what orders he pleased about the game; and the father had encouraged him to take something like the management of the property into his hands. There might be some fifteen hundred acres of it altogether, and the archdeacon had rejoiced over it with his wife scores of times, saying that there was many a squire in the county whose elder son would never find himself half so well placed as would his own younger son. Now there was a string of narrow woods called Plumstead Cop-

pices which ran from a point near the church right across the parish, dividing the archdeacon's land from the Ullathorne estate, and these coppices, or belts of woodland, belonged to the archdeacon. On the morning of which we are speaking, the archdeacon, mounted on his cob, still thinking of his son's iniquity and of his own fixed resolve to punish him as he had said that he would punish him, opened with his whip a woodland gate, from which a green muddy lane led through the trees up to the house of his gamekeeper. The man's wife was ill, and in his ordinary way of business the archdeacon was about to call and ask after her health. At the door of the cottage he found the man, who was woodman as well as gamekeeper, and was responsible for fences and faggots, as well as for foxes and pheasants' eggs.

"How 's Martha, Flurry?" said the archdeacon.

"Thanking your reverence, she be a deal improved since the mistress was here,—last Tuesday it was, I think."

"I 'm glad of that. It was only rheumatism, I suppose?"

"Just a tich of fever with it, your reverence, the doctor said."

"Tell her I was asking after it. I won't mind getting down to-day, as I am rather busy. She has had what she wanted from the house?"

"The mistress has been very good in that way. She always is, God bless her!"

"Good-day to you, Flurry. I 'll ask Mr. Sims to come and read to her a bit this afternoon, or to-morrow morning." The archdeacon kept two curates, and Mr. Sims was one of them.

"She 'll take it very kindly, your reverence. But while you are here, sir, there 's just a word I 'd like to say. I did n't happen to catch Mr. Henry when he was here the other day."

"Never mind Mr. Henry; what is it you have to say?"

"I do think, I do indeed, sir, that Mr. Thorne's man ain't dealing fairly along of the foxes. I would n't say a word about it, only that Mr. Henry is so particular."

"What about the foxes? What is he doing with the foxes?"

"Well, sir, he 's a-trapping on 'em. He is, indeed, your reverence. I would n't speak if I war n't well nigh mortial sure."

Now the archdeacon had never been a hunting man, though in his early days many a clergyman had been in the habit of hunting without losing his clerical character by doing so; but he had lived all his life among gentlemen in a hunting county, and had his own very strong ideas about the trapping of foxes. Foxes first and pheasants afterwards, had always been the rule with him as to any land of which he himself had had the management. And no man understood better than he did how to deal with keepers as to this matter of fox preserving, or knew better that keepers will in truth obey not the words of their employers, but their sympathies. "Wish them to have foxes, and pay them, and they will have them," Mr. Sowerby of Chaldicotes used to say, and he in his day was reckoned to be the best preserver of foxes in Barsetshire. "Tell them to have them, and don't wish it, and pay them well, and you won't have a fox to interfere with your game. I

don't care what a man says to me, I can read it all like a book when I see his coverts drawn." That was what poor Mr. Sowerby of Chaldicotes used to say, and the archdeacon had heard him say it a score of times, and had learned the lesson. But now his heart was not with the foxes,—and especially not with the foxes on behalf of his son Henry. "I can't have any meddling with Mr. Thorne," he said; "I can't and I won't."

"But I don't suppose it can be Mr. Thorne's order, your reverence; and Mr. Henry is so particular."

"Of course it is n't Mr. Thorne's order. Mr. Thorne has been a hunting man all his life."

"But he have guv' up now, your reverence. He ain't a-hunted these two years."

"I 'm sure he would n't have the foxes trapped."

"Not if he knowed it, he would n't, your reverence. A gentleman of the likes of him, who 's been a-hunting over fifty year, would n't do the likes of that; but the foxes is trapped, and Mr. Henry 'll be a-putting it on me if I don't speak out. They is Plumstead foxes, too; and a vixen was trapped just across the field yonder, in Goshall Springs, no later than yesterday morning." Flurry was now thoroughly in earnest; and, indeed, the trapping of a vixen in February is a serious thing.

"Goshall Springs don't belong to me," said the archdeacon.

"No, your reverence; they 're on the Ullathorne property. But a word from your reverence would do it. Mr. Henry thinks more of the foxes than anything. The last word he told me was that it would break his heart if he saw the coppices drawn blank."

"Then he must break his heart." The words were pronounced, but the archdeacon had so much command over himself as to speak them in such a voice that the man should not hear them. But it was incumbent on him to say something that the man should hear. "I will have no meddling in the matter, Flurry. Whether there are foxes or whether there are not, is matter of no great moment. I will not have a word said to annoy Mr. Thorne." Then he rode away, back through the wood and out on to the road, and the horse walked with him leisurely on, whither the archdeacon hardly knew,—for he was thinking, thinking, thinking. "Well;—if that ain't the darn'dest thing that ever was," said Flurry; "but I 'll tell the squire about Thorne's man,—darned if I don't." Now "the squire" was young Squire Gresham, the master of the East Barsetshire hounds.

But the archdeacon went on thinking, thinking, thinking. He could have heard nothing of his son to stir him more in his favour than this strong evidence of his partiality for foxes. I do not mean it to be understood that the archdeacon regarded foxes as better than active charity, or a contented mind, or a meek spirit, or than self-denying temperance. No doubt all these virtues did hold in his mind their proper places, altogether beyond contamination of foxes. But he had prided himself on thinking that his son should be a country gentleman, and, probably nothing doubting as to the major's active charity and other virtues, was delighted to receive evidence of those tastes which he had ever wished to encourage in his son's character. Or rather, such evidence would have delighted him at any other time than the present. Now it only added

more gall to his cup. "Why should he teach himself to care for such things, when he has not the spirit to enjoy them?" said the archdeacon to himself. "He is a fool,—a fool. A man that has been married once, to go crazy after a little girl, that has hardly a dress to her back, and who never was in a drawing-room in her life! Charles is the eldest, and he shall be the eldest. It will be better to keep it together. It is the way in which the country has become what it is." He was out nearly all day, and did not see his wife till dinner-time. Her father, Mr. Harding, was still with them, but had breakfasted in his own room. Not a word, therefore, was said about Henry Grantly between the father and mother on that evening.

Mrs. Grantly was determined that, unless provoked, she would say nothing to him till the following morning. He would sleep upon his wrath before she spoke to him again. And he was equally unwilling to recur to the subject. Had she permitted it, the next morning would have passed away, and no word would have been spoken. But this would not have suited her. She had his orders to write, and she had undertaken to obey these orders,—with the delay of one day. Were she not to write at all,—or in writing to send no message from the father, there would be cause for further anger. And yet this, I think, was what the archdeacon wished.

"Archdeacon," she said, "I shall write to Henry to-day."

"Very well."

"And what am I to say from you?"

"I told you yesterday what are my intentions."

"I am not asking about that now. We hope there

will be years and years to come, in which you may change them, and shape them as you will. What shall I tell him now from you?"

"I have nothing to say to him,—nothing; not a word. He knows what he has to expect from me, for I have told him. He is acting with his eyes open, and so am I. If he marries Miss Crawley, he must live on his own means. I told him that myself so plainly, that he can want no further intimation." Then Mrs. Grantly knew that she was absolved from the burden of yesterday's message, and she plumed herself on the prudence of her conduct. On the same morning the archdeacon wrote the following note:—

"Dear Thorne,—My man tells me that foxes have been trapped on Darvell's farm, just outside the coppices. I know nothing of it myself, but I am sure you 'll look to it.

"Yours always,

"T. GRANTLY."

CHAPTER V.

MRS. PROUDIE SENDS FOR HER LAWYER.

THERE was great dismay in Barchester Palace after the visit paid to the bishop and Mrs. Proudie by that terrible clerical offender, Mr. Crawley. It will be remembered, perhaps, how he had defied the bishop with spoken words, and how he had defied the bishop's wife by speaking no words to her. For the moment, no doubt, Mr. Crawley had the best of it. Mrs. Proudie acknowledged to herself that this was the case; but as she was a woman who had never yet succumbed to an enemy, who had never,—if on such an occasion I may be allowed to use a school-boy's slang,—taken à licking from any one,—it was not likely that Mr. Crawley would be long allowed to enjoy his triumph in peace. It would be odd if all the weight of the palace would not be able to silence a wretch of a perpetual curate who had already been committed to take his trial for thieving;—and Mrs. Proudie was determined that all the weight of the palace should be used. As for the bishop, though he was not as angry as his wife, he was quite as unhappy, and therefore quite as hostile to Mr. Crawley; and was fully conscious that there could be no peace for him now until Mr. Crawley should be crushed. If only the assizes would come at once, and get him condemned out of the way, what a

blessed thing it would be! But unluckily it still wanted nearly three months to the assizes, and during those three months Mr. Crawley would be at large and subject only to episcopal authority. During that time he could not be silenced by the arm of the civil law. His wife was not long in expressing her opinion after Mr. Crawley had left the palace. "You must proceed against him in the Court of Arches,—and that at once," said Mrs. Proudie. "You can do that, of course? I know that it will be expensive. Of course it will be expensive. I suppose it may cost us some hundreds of pounds; but duty is duty, my lord, and in such a case as this your duty as a bishop is paramount."

The poor bishop knew that it was useless to explain to her the various mistakes which she made,—which she was ever making,—as to the extent of his powers and the modes of procedure which were open to him. When he would do so she would only rail at him for being lukewarm in his office, poor in spirit, and afraid of dealing roundly with those below him. On the present occasion he did say a word, but she would not even hear him to the end. "Don't tell me about rural deans, as if I did n't know. The rural dean has nothing to do with such a case. The man has been committed for trial. Send for Mr. Chadwick at once, and let steps be taken before you are an hour older."

"But, my dear, Mr. Chadwick can do nothing."

"Then I will see Mr. Chadwick." And in her anger she did sit down and write a note to Mr. Chadwick, begging him to come over to her at the palace.

Mr. Chadwick was a lawyer, living in Barchester, who earned his bread from ecclesiastical business. His father, and his uncle, and his grandfather and grand-

uncles, had all been concerned in the affairs of the diocese of Barchester. His uncle had been bailiff to the episcopal estates, or steward as he had been called, in Bishop Grantly's time, and still contrived to draw his income in some shape from the property of the see. The nephew had also been the legal assistant of the bishop in his latter days, and had been continued in that position by Bishop Proudie, not from love, but from expediency. Mr. John Chadwick was one of those gentlemen, two or three of whom are to be seen in connection with every see,—who seem to be hybrids —half-lay, half-cleric. They dress like clergymen, and affect that mixture of clerical solemnity and clerical waggishness which is generally to be found among minor canons and vicar-chorals of a cathedral. They live, or at least have their offices, half in the close and half out of it,—dwelling as it were just on the borders of holy orders. They always wear white neck-handkerchiefs and black gloves; and would be altogether clerical in their appearance, were it not that as regards the outward man they impinge somewhat on the characteristics of the undertaker. They savour of the church, but the savour is of the church's exterior. Any stranger thrown into chance contact with one of them would, from instinct, begin to talk of things ecclesiastical without any reference to things theological or things religious. They are always most worthy men, much respected in the society of the close, and I never heard of one of them whose wife was not comfortable or whose children were left without provision.

Such a one was Mr. John Chadwick, and as it was a portion of his duties to accompany the bishop to con-

secrations and ordinations, he knew Dr. Proudie very well. Having been brought up, as it were, under the very wing of Bishop Grantly, it could not well be that he should love Bishop Grantly's successor. The old bishop and the new bishop had been so different that no man could like, or even esteem, them both. But Mr. Chadwick was a prudent man, who knew well the source from which he earned his bread, and he had never quarrelled with Bishop Proudie. He knew Mrs. Proudie also,—of necessity,—and when I say of him that he had hitherto avoided any open quarrel with her, it will, I think, be allowed that he was a man of prudence and sagacity.

But he had sometimes been sorely tried, and he felt when he got her note that he was now about to encounter a very sore trial. He muttered something which might have been taken for an oath, were it not that the outward signs of the man gave warranty that no oath could proceed from such a one. Then he wrote a short note presenting his compliments to Mrs. Proudie, and saying that he would call at the palace at eleven o'clock on the following morning.

But, in the mean time, Mrs. Proudie, who could not be silent on the subject for a moment, did learn something of the truth from her husband. The information did not come to her in the way of instruction, but was teased out of the unfortunate man. "I know that you can proceed against him in the Court of Arches, under the 'Church Discipline Act,'" she said.

"No, my dear; no," said the bishop, shaking his head in his misery.

"Or in the Consistorial Court. It 's all the same thing."

"There must be an inquiry first,—by his brother clergy. There must indeed. It 's the only way of proceeding."

"But there has been an inquiry, and he has been committed."

"That does n't signify, my dear. That 's the Civil Law."

"And if the Civil Law condemns him, and locks him up in prison;—as it most certainly will do?"

"But it has n't done so yet, my dear. I really think that as it has gone so far, it will be best to leave it as it is till he has taken his trial."

"What! leave him there after what occurred this morning in this palace?" The palace with Mrs. Proudie was always a palace, and never a house. "No; no; ten thousand times, no. Are you not aware that he insulted you, and grossly, most grossly insulted me? I was never treated with such insolence by any clergyman before, since I first came to this palace;—never, never. And we know the man to be a thief;—we absolutely know it. Think, my lord, of the souls of his people!"

"Oh, dear; oh, dear; oh, dear," said the bishop.

"Why do you fret yourself in that way?"

"Because you will get me into trouble. I tell you the only thing to be done is to issue a commission with the rural dean at the head of it."

"Then issue a commission."

"And they will take three months."

"Why should they take three months? Why should they take more than three days,—or three hours? It is all plain sailing."

"These things are never plain sailing, my dear.

When a bishop has to oppose any of his clergy, it is always made as difficult as possible."

"More shame for them who make it so."

"But it is so. If I were to take legal proceedings against him, it would cost,—oh, dear,—more than a thousand pounds, I should say."

"If it costs two you must do it." Mrs. Proudie's anger was still very hot, or she would not have spoken of an unremunerative outlay of money in such language as that.

In this manner she did come to understand, before the arrival of Mr. Chadwick, that her husband could take no legal steps towards silencing Mr. Crawley until a commission of clergymen had been appointed to inquire into the matter, and that that commission should be headed by the rural dean within the limits of whose rural deanery the parish of Hogglestock was situated, or by some beneficed parochial clergyman of repute in the neighbourhood. Now the rural dean was Dr. Tempest of Silverbridge,—who had held that position before the coming of Dr. Proudie to the diocese; and there had grown up in the bosom of Mrs. Proudie a strong feeling that undue mercy had been shown to Mr. Crawley by the magistrates of Silverbridge, of whom Dr. Tempest had been one. "These magistrates had taken bail for his appearance at the assizes, instead of committing him to prison at once,—as they were bound to do, when such an offence as that had been committed by a clergyman. But, no;—even though there was a clergyman among them, they had thought nothing of the souls of the poor people!" In such language Mrs. Proudie had spoken of the affair at Silverbridge, and having once committed herself to such

an opinion, of course she thought that Dr. Tempest would go through fire and water,—would omit no stretch of what little judicial power might be committed to his hands,—with the view of opposing his bishop and maintaining the culprit in his position. "In such a case as this, cannot you name an acting rural dean yourself? Dr. Tempest, you know, is very old.' "No, my dear; no; I cannot." "You can ask Mr. Chadwick, at any rate, and then you could name Mr. Thumble." "But Mr. Thumble does n't even hold a living in the diocese. Oh, dear; oh, dear; oh, dear!" And so the matter rested until Mr. Chadwick came.

Mrs. Proudie had no doubt intended to have Mr. Chadwick all to herself,—at any rate so to encounter him in the first instance. But having been at length convinced that the inquiry by the rural dean was really necessary as a preliminary, and having also slept upon the question of expenditure, she gave directions that the lawyer should be shown into the bishop's study, and she took care to be absent at the moment of his arrival. Of course she did not intend that Mr. Chadwick should leave the palace without having heard what she had to say, but she thought that it would be well that he should be made to conceive that though the summons had been written by her, it had really been intended on the part of the bishop. "Mr. Chadwick will be with you at eleven, bishop," she said, as she got up from the breakfast-table, at which she left his lordship with two of his daughters and with a married son-in-law, a clergyman who was staying in the house. "Very well, my dear," said the bishop with a smile,—for he was anxious not to betray any vexation at his wife's interference before his daughters or the

Rev. Mr. Tickler. But he understood it all. Mr. Chadwick had been sent for with reference to Mr. Crawley, and he was driven,—absolutely driven, to propose to his lawyer that this commission of inquiry should be issued.

Punctually at eleven Mr. Chadwick came, wearing a very long face as he entered the palace door,—for he felt that he would in all probability be now compelled to quarrel with Mrs. Proudie. Much he could bear, but there was a limit to his endurance. She had never absolutely sent for him before, though she had often interfered with him. "I shall have to tell her a bit of my mind," he said, as he stepped across the close, habited in his best suit of black, with most exact white cravat, and yet looking not quite like a clergyman, with some touch of the undertaker in his gait. When he found that he was shown into the bishop's room, and that the bishop was there,—and the bishop only,—his mind was relieved. It would have been better that the bishop should have written himself, or that the chaplain should have written in his lordship's name; that, however, was a trifle.

But the bishop did not know what to say to him. If he intended to direct an inquiry to be made by the rural dean, it would be by no means becoming that he should consult Mr. Chadwick as to doing so. It might be well, or if not well, at any rate not improper, that he should make the application to Dr. Tempest through Mr. Chadwick; but in that case he must give the order at once, and he still wished to avoid it if it were possible. Since he had been in the diocese no case so grave as this had been pushed upon him. The intervention of the rural dean in an ordinary way he had

used,—had been made to use,—more than once, by his wife. A vicar had been absent a little too long from one parish, and there had been rumours about brandy-and-water in another. Once he had been very nearly in deep water because Mrs. Proudie had taken it in dudgeon that a certain young rector, who had been left a widower, had a very pretty governess for his children; and there had been that case, sadly notorious in the diocese at the time, of our excellent friend Mr. Robarts of Framley, when the bailiffs were in his house because he could n't pay his debts,—or rather, the debts of his friend for whom he had signed bills. But in all these cases some good fortune had intervened, and he had been saved from the terrible necessity of any ulterior process. But now,—now he was being driven beyond himself, and all to no purpose. If Mrs. Proudie would only wait three months the civil law would do it all for him. But here was Mr. Chadwick in the room, and he knew that it would be useless for him to attempt to talk to Mr. Chadwick about other matters, and so dismiss him. The wife of his bosom would be down upon them before Chadwick could be out of the room.

"H—m—ha. How d'ye do, Mr. Chadwick—won't you sit down?" Mr. Chadwick thanked his lordship, and sat down. "It 's very cold, is n't it, Mr. Chadwick?"

"A hard frost, my lord, but a beautiful day."

"Won't you come near the fire?" The bishop knew that Mrs. Proudie was on the road, and had an eye to the proper strategical position of his forces. Mrs. Proudie would certainly take up her position in a certain chair from whence the light enabled her to rake

her husband thoroughly. What advantage she might have from this he could not prevent;—but he could so place Mr. Chadwick, that the lawyer should be more within the reach of his eye than that of his wife. So the bishop pointed to an arm-chair opposite to himself and near the fire, and Mr. Chadwick seated himself accordingly.

"This is a very sad affair about Mr. Crawley," said the bishop.

"Very sad indeed," said the lawyer. "I never pitied a man so much in my life, my lord."

This was not exactly the line which the bishop was desirous of taking. "Of course he is to be pitied;—of course he is. But from all I hear, Mr. Chadwick, I am afraid,—I am afraid we must not acquit him."

"As to that, my lord, he has to stand his trial, of course."

"But, you see, Mr. Chadwick, regarding him as a beneficed clergyman,—with a cure of souls,—the question is whether I should be justified in leaving him where he is till his trial shall come on."

"Of course your lordship knows best about that, but——"

"I know there is a difficulty. I know that. But I am inclined to think that in the interests of the parish I am bound to issue a commission of inquiry."

"I believe your lordship has attempted to silence him, and that he has refused to comply."

"I thought it better for everybody's sake,—especially for his own, that he should for a while be relieved from his duties; but he is an obstinate man, a very obstinate man. I made the attempt with all consideration for his feelings."

"He is hard put to it, my lord. I know the man and his pride. The dean has spoken of him to me more than once, and nobody knows him so well as the dean. If I might venture to offer an opinion——"

"Good-morning, Mr. Chadwick," said Mrs. Proudie, coming into the room and taking her accustomed seat. "No, thank you, no; I will stay away from the fire, if you please. His lordship has spoken to you no doubt about this unfortunate, wretched man?"

"We are speaking of him now, my dear."

"Something must of course be done to put a stop to the crying disgrace of having such a man preaching from a pulpit in this diocese. When I think of the souls of the people in that poor village, my hair literally stands on end. And then he is disobedient!"

"That is the worst of it," said the bishop. "It would have been so much better for himself if he would have allowed me to provide quietly for the services till the trial be over."

"I could have told you, my lord, that he would not do that, from what I knew of him," said Mr. Chadwick.

"But he must do it," said Mrs. Proudie. "He must be made to do it."

"His lordship will find it difficult," said Mr. Chadwick.

"I can issue a commission, you know, to the rural dean," said the bishop mildly.

"Yes, you can do that. And Dr. Tempest in two months' time will have named his assessors——"

"Dr. Tempest must not name them; the bishop must name them," said Mrs. Proudie.

"It is customary to leave that to the rural dean,"

said Mr. Chadwick. "The bishop no doubt can object to any one named."

"And can specially select any clergyman he pleases from the archdeaconry," said the bishop. "I have known it done."

"The rural dean in such case has probably been an old man, and not active," said the lawyer.

"And Dr. Tempest is a very old man," said Mrs. Proudie, "and in such a matter not at all trustworthy. He was one of the magistrates who took bail."

"His lordship could hardly set him aside," said the lawyer. "At any rate I would not recommend him to try. I think you might suggest a commission of five, and propose two of the number yourself. I do not think that in such a case Dr. Tempest would raise any question."

At last it was settled in this way. Mr. Chadwick was to prepare a letter to Dr. Tempest, for the bishop's signature, in which the doctor should be requested, as the rural dean to whom Mr. Crawley was subject, to hold a commission of five to inquire into Mr. Crawley's conduct. The letter was to explain to Dr. Tempest that the bishop, moved by his solicitude for the souls of the people of Hogglestock, had endeavoured, "in a friendly way," to induce Mr. Crawley to desist from his ministrations; but that having failed through Mr. Crawley's obstinacy, he had no alternative but to proceed in this way.

"You had better say that his lordship, as bishop of the diocese, can take no heed of the coming trial," said Mrs. Proudie.

"I think his lordship had better say nothing at all about the trial," said Mr. Chadwick.

"I think that will be best," said the bishop.

"But if they report against him," said Mr. Chadwick, "you can only then proceed in the ecclesiastical court,—at your own expense."

"He 'll hardly be so obstinate as that," said the bishop.

"I'm afraid you don't know him, my lord," said the lawyer. The bishop, thinking of the scene which had taken place in that very room only yesterday, felt that he did know Mr. Crawley, and felt also that the hope which he had just expressed was one in which he himself put no trust. But something might turn up; and it was devoutly to be hoped that Dr. Tempest would take a long time over his inquiry. The assizes might come on as soon as it was terminated, or very shortly afterwards; and then everything might be well. "You won't find Dr. Tempest very ready at it," said Mr. Chadwick. The bishop in his heart was comforted by the words. "But he must be made to be ready to do his duty," said Mrs. Proudie, imperiously. Mr. Chadwick shrugged his shoulders, then got up, spoke his farewell little speeches, and left the palace.

CHAPTER VI.

LILY DALE WRITES TWO WORDS IN HER BOOK.

JOHN EAMES saw nothing more of Lily Dale till he packed up his portmanteau, left his mother's house, and went to stay for a few days with his old friend Lady Julia; and this did not happen till he had been above a week at Guestwick. Mrs. Dale repeatedly said that it was odd that Johnny did not come to see them; and Grace, speaking of him to Lily, asked why he did not come. Lily, in her funny way, declared that he would come soon enough. But even while she was joking there was something of half-expressed consciousness in her words,—as though she felt it to be foolish to speak of his coming as she might of that of any other young man, before people who knew her whole story. "He 'll come quick enough. He knows, and I know, that his coming will do no good. Of course I shall be glad to see him. Why should n't I be glad to see him? I 've known him and liked him all my life. I liked him when there did not seem to be much about him to like, and now that he is clever, and agreeable, and good-looking,—which he never was as a lad,—why should n't I go on liking him? He 's more like a brother to me than anybody else I 've got. James,"—James was her brother-in-law, Dr. Crofts,—"thinks of nothing but his patients and his babies, and

my cousin Bernard is much too grand a person for me to take the liberty of loving him. I shall be very glad to see Johnny Eames." From all which Mrs. Dale was led to believe that Johnny's case was still hopeless. And how should it not be hopeless? Had Lily not confessed within the last week or two that she still loved Adolphus Crosbie?

Mrs. Eames also, and Mary, were surprised that John did not go over to Allington. "You have n't seen Mrs. Dale yet, or the squire?" said his mother.

"I shall see them when I am at the cottage."

"Yes; no doubt. But it seems strange that you should be here so long without going to them."

"There 's time enough," said he. "I shall have nothing else to do when I 'm at the cottage." Then, when Mary had spoken to him again in private, expressing a hope that there was "nothing wrong," he had been very angry with his sister. "What do you mean by wrong? What rubbish you girls talk! and you never have any delicacy of feeling to make you silent."

"Oh, John, don't say such hard things as that of me!"

"But I do say them. You 'll make me swear among you some day that I will never see Lily Dale again. As it is, I wish I never had seen her,—simply because I 'm so dunned about it." In all of which I think that Johnny was manifestly wrong. When the humour was on him he was fond enough of talking about Lily Dale. Had he not taught her to do so, I doubt whether his sister would ever have mentioned Lily's name to him. "I did not mean to dun you, John," said Mary, meekly.

But at last he went to Lady Julia's, and was no sooner there than he was ready to start for Allington. When Lady Julia spoke to him about Lily, he did not venture to snub her. Indeed, of all his friends, Lady Julia was the one with whom on this subject he allowed himself the most unrestricted confidence. He came over one day, just before dinner, and declared his intention of walking over to Allington immediately after breakfast on the following morning. "It 's the last time, Lady Julia," he said.

"So you say, Johnny."

"And so I mean it! What 's the good of a man frittering away his life? What 's the good of wishing for what you can't get?"

"Jacob was not in such a hurry when he wished for Rachel."

"That was all very well for an old patriarch who had seven or eight hundred years to live."

"My dear John, you forget your Bible. Jacob did not live half as long as that."

"He lived long enough, and slowly enough, to be able to wait fourteen years;—and then he had something to comfort him in the mean time. And, after all, Lady Julia, it 's more than seven years since I first thought Lily was the prettiest girl I ever saw."

"How old are you now?"

"Twenty-seven,—and she 's twenty-four."

"You 've time enough yet, if you 'll only be patient."

"I 'll be patient for to-morrow, Lady Julia, but never again. Not that I mean to quarrel with her. I 'm not such a fool as to quarrel with a girl because she can't like me. I know how it all is. If that scoundrel had not come across my path just when he did,—

in that very nick of time, all might have been right betwixt her and me. I could n't have offered to marry her before, when I had n't as much income as would have found her in bread-and-butter. And then, just as better times came to me, he stepped in! I wonder whether it will be expected of me that I should forgive him?"

"As far as that goes, you have no right to be angry with him."

"But I am,—all the same."

"And so was I,—but not for stepping in, as you call it."

"You and I are different, Lady Julia. I was angry with him for stepping in; but I could n't show it. Then he stepped out, and I did manage to show it. And now I should n't wonder if he does n't step in again. After all, why should he have such a power? It was simply the nick of time which gave it to him." That John Eames should be able to find some consolation in this consideration is devoutly to be hoped by us all.

There was nothing said about Lily Dale the next morning at breakfast. Lady Julia observed that John was dressed a little more neatly than usual;—though the change was not such as to have called for her special observation, had she not known the business on which he was intent.

"You have nothing to send to the Dales?" he said, as he got up from the table.

"Nothing but my love, Johnny."

"No worsted or embroidery work,—or a pot of special jam for the squire?"

"No, sir, nothing; though I should like to make you carry a pair of panniers, if I could."

"They would become me well," said Johnny, "for I am going on an ass's errand." Then, without waiting for the word of affection which was on the old woman's lips, he got himself out of the room, and started on his journey.

The walk was only three miles and the weather was dry and frosty, and he had come to the turn leading up to the church and the squire's house almost before he remembered that he was near Allington. Here he paused for a moment to think. If he continued his way down by the Red Lion and through Allington Street, he must knock at Mrs. Dale's door, and ask for admission by means of the servant,—as would be done by any ordinary visitor. But he could make his way on to the lawn by going up beyond the wall of the churchyard and through the squire's garden. He knew the path well,—very well; and he thought that he might take so much liberty as that, both with the squire and with Mrs. Dale, although his visits to Allington were not so frequent now as they used to be in the days of his boyhood. He did not wish to be admitted by the servant, and therefore he went through the gardens. Luckily he did not see the squire, who would have detained him, and he escaped from Hopkins, the old gardener, with little more than a word. "I 'm going down to see the ladies, Hopkins; I suppose I shall find them?" And then, while Hopkins was arranging his spade so that he might lean upon it for a little chat, Johnny was gone and had made his way into the other garden. He had thought it possible that he might meet Lily out among the walks by herself, and such a meeting as this would have suited him better than any other. And as he crossed the

little bridge which separated the gardens he thought of more than one such meeting,—of one especial occasion on which he had first ventured to tell her in plain words that he loved her. But before that day Crosbie had come there, and at the moment in which he was speaking of his love she regarded Crosbie as an angel of light upon the earth. What hope could there have been for him then? What use was there in his telling such a tale of love at that time? When he told it, he knew that Crosbie had been before him. He knew that Crosbie was at that moment the angel of light. But as he had never before been able to speak of his love, so was he then unable not to speak of it. He had spoken, and of course had been simply rebuked. Since that day Crosbie had ceased to be an angel of light, and he, John Eames, had spoken often. But he had spoken in vain, and now he would speak once again.

He went through the garden and over the lawn belonging to the Small House and saw no one. He forgot, I think, that ladies do not come out to pick roses when the ground is frozen, and that croquet is not often in progress with the hoar-frost on the grass. So he walked up to the little terrace before the drawing-room, and looking in saw Mrs. Dale, and Lily, and Grace at their morning work. Lily was drawing, and Mrs. Dale was writing, and Grace had her needle in her hand. As it happened, no one at first perceived him, and he had time to feel that after all he would have managed better if he had been announced in the usual way. As, however, it was now necessary that he should announce himself, he knocked at the window, and they all immediately looked up and saw him.

"It 's my cousin John," said Grace. "Oh, Johnny, how are you at last?" said Mrs. Dale. But it was Lily who, without speaking, opened the window for him, who was the first to give him her hand, and who led him through into the room.

"It 's a great shame my coming in this way," said John, "and letting all the cold air in upon you."

"We shall survive it," said Mrs. Dale. "I suppose you have just come down from my brother-in-law?"

"No; I have not seen the squire as yet. I will do so before I go back, of course. But it seemed such a commonplace sort of thing to go round by the village."

"We are very glad to see you, by whatever way you come;—are we not, mamma?" said Lily.

"I 'm not so sure of that. We were only saying yesterday that as you had been in the country a fortnight without coming to us, we did not think we would be at home when you did come."

"But I have caught you, you see," said Johnny.

And so they went on, chatting of old times and of mutual friends very comfortably for full an hour. And there was some serious conversation about Grace's father and his affairs, and John declared his opinion that Mr. Crawley ought to go to his cousin, Thomas Toogood, not at all knowing at that time that Mr. Crawley himself had come to the same opinion. And John gave them an elaborate description of Sir Raffle Buffle, standing up with his back to the fire with his hat on his head, and speaking with a loud harsh voice, to show them the way in which he declared that that gentleman received his inferiors; and then bowing and scraping and rubbing his hands together and simpering with would-be softness,—declaring that after that

fashion Sir Raffle received his superiors. And they were very merry—so that no one would have thought that Johnny was a despondent lover, now bent on throwing the dice for his last stake; or that Lily was aware that she was in the presence of one lover, and that she was like to fall to the ground between two stools,—having two lovers, neither of whom could serve her turn.

"How can you consent to serve him if he 's such a man as that?" said Lily, speaking of Sir Raffle.

"I do not serve him. I serve the Queen,—or rather the public. I don't take his wages, and he does not play his tricks with me. He knows that he can't. He has tried it, and has failed. And he only keeps me where I am because I 've had some money left me. He thinks it fine to have a private secretary with a fortune. I know that he tells people all manner of lies about it, making it out to be five times as much as it is. Dear old Huffle Scuffle. He is such an ass; and yet he 's had wit enough to get to the top of the tree, and to keep himself there. He began the world without a penny. Now he has got a handle to his name, and he 'll live in clover all his life. It 's very odd, is n't it, Mrs. Dale?"

"I suppose he does his work?"

"When men get so high as that, there 's no knowing whether they work or whether they don't. There is n't much for them to do, as far as I can see. They have to look beautiful, and frighten the young ones."

"And does Sir Raffle look beautiful?" Lily asked.

"After a fashion, he does. There is something imposing about such a man till you 're used to it, and can see through it. Of course it 's all padding. There

are men who work, no doubt. But among the bigwigs, and bishops, and Cabinet ministers, I fancy that the looking beautiful is the chief part of it. Dear me, you don't mean to say it 's luncheon time?"

But it was luncheon time, and not only had he not as yet said a word of all that which he had come to say, but had not as yet made any move towards getting it said. How was he to arrange that Lily should be left alone with him? Lady Julia had said that she should not expect him back till dinner-time, and he had answered her lackadaisically, "I don't suppose I shall be there above ten minutes. Ten minutes will say all I 've got to say, and do all I 've got to do. And then I suppose that I shall go and cut names about upon bridges,—eh, Lady Julia?" Lady Julia understood his words; for once, upon a former occasion, she had found him cutting Lily's name on the rail of a wooden bridge in her brother's grounds. But he had now been a couple of hours at the Small House, and had not said a word of that which he had come to say.

"Are you going to walk out with us after lunch?" said Lily.

"He will have had walking enough," said Mrs. Dale.

"We 'll convoy him back part of the way," said Lily.

"I 'm not going yet," said Johnny, "unless you turn me out."

"But we must have our walk before it is dark," said Lily.

"You might go up with him to your uncle," said Mrs. Dale. "Indeed, I promised to go up myself, and so did you, Grace, to see the microscope. I heard Mr. Dale give orders that one of those long-legged reptiles should be caught on purpose for your inspection."

Mrs. Dale's little scheme for bringing the two together was very transparent, but it was not the less wise on that account. Schemes will often be successful, let them be ever so transparent. Little intrigues become necessary, not to conquer unwilling people, but people who are willing enough, who, nevertheless, cannot give way except under the machinations of an intrigue.

"I don't think I 'll mind looking at the long-legged creature to-day," said Johnny.

"I must go, of course," said Grace.

Lily said nothing at the moment, either about the long-legged creature or the walk. That which must be, must be. She knew well why John Eames had come there. She knew that the visits to his mother and to Lady Julia would never have been made, but that he might have this interview. And he had a right to demand, at any rate, as much as that. That which must be, must be. And therefore when both Mrs. Dale and Grace stoutly maintained their purpose of going up to the squire, Lily neither attempted to persuade John to accompany them, nor said that she would do so herself.

"I will convoy you home myself," she said, "and Grace, when she has done with the beetle, shall come and meet me. Won't you, Grace?"

"Certainly."

"We are not helpless young ladies in these parts, nor yet timorous," continued Lily. "We can walk about without being afraid of ghosts, robbers, wild bulls, young men, or gipsies. Come the field path, Grace. I will go as far as the big oak with him, and then I shall turn back, and I shall come in by the stile

opposite the church gate, and through the garden. So you can't miss me."

"I dare say he 'll come back with you," said Grace.

"No, he won't. He will do nothing of the kind. He 'll have to go on and open Lady Julia's bottle of port wine for his own drinking."

All this was very good on Lily's part, and very good also on the part of Mrs. Dale; and John was of course very much obliged to them. But there was a lack of romance in it all, which did not seem to him to argue well as to his success. He did not think much about it, but he felt that Lily would not have been so ready to arrange their walk had she intended to yield to his entreaty. No doubt in these latter days plain good sense had become the prevailing mark of her character,—perhaps, as Johnny thought, a little too strongly prevailing; but even with all her plain good sense and determination to dispense with the absurdities of romance in the affairs of her life, she would not have proposed herself as his companion for a walk across the fields merely that she might have an opportunity of accepting his hand. He did not say all this to himself, but he instinctively felt that it was so. And he felt also that it should have been his duty to arrange the walk, or the proper opportunity for the scene that was to come. She had done it instead,—she and her mother between them, thereby forcing upon him a painful conviction that he himself had not been equal to the occasion. "I always make a mull of it," he said to himself, when the girls went up to get their hats.

They went down together through the garden, and parted where the paths led away, one to the Great

House and the other towards the church. "I 'll certainly come and call upon the squire before I go back to London," said Johnny.

"We 'll tell him so," said Mrs. Dale. "He would be sure to hear that you had been with us, even if we said nothing about it."

"Of course he would," said Lily; "Hopkins has seen him." Then they separated, and Lily and John Eames were together.

Hardly a word was said, perhaps not a word, till they had crossed the road and got into the field opposite to the church. And in this first field there was more than one path, and the children of the village were often there, and it had about it something of a public nature. John Eames felt that it was by no means a fitting field to say that which he had to say. In crossing it, therefore, he merely remarked that the day was very fine for walking. Then he added one special word, "And it is so good of you, Lily, to come with me."

"I am very glad to come with you. I would do more than that, John, to show how glad I am to see you." Then they had come to the second little gate, and beyond that the fields were really fields, and there were stiles instead of wicket-gates, and the business of the day must be begun.

"Lily, whenever I come here you say you are glad to see me."

"And so I am,—very glad. Only that you would take it as meaning what it does not mean, I would tell you, that of all my friends living away from the reach of my daily life, you are the one whose coming is ever the most pleasant to me."

"Oh, Lily!"

"It was, I think, only yesterday that I was telling Grace that you are more like a brother to me than any one else. I wish it might be so. I wish we might swear to be brother and sister. I 'd do more for you then than walk across the fields with you to Guestwick Cottage. Your prosperity would then be the thing in the world for which I should be most anxious. And if you should marry——"

"It can never be like that between us," said Johnny.

"Can it not? I think it can. Perhaps not this year, or next year; perhaps not in the next five years. But I make myself happy with thinking that it may be so some day. I shall wait for it patiently, very patiently, even though you should rebuff me again and again,—as you have done now."

"I have not rebuffed you."

"Not maliciously, or injuriously, or offensively. I will be very patient and take little rebuffs without complaining. This is the worst stile of all. When Grace and I are here together we can never manage it without tearing ourselves all to pieces. It is much nicer to have you to help me."

"Let me help you always," he said, keeping her hands in his after he had aided her to jump from the stile to the ground.

"Yes, as my brother."

"That is nonsense, Lily."

"Is it nonsense? Nonsense is a hard word."

"It is nonsense as coming from you to me. Lily, I sometimes think that I am persecuting you, writing to you, coming after you, as I am doing now,—telling you the same whining story, asking, asking, and asking

for that which you say you will never give me. And then I feel ashamed of myself, and swear that I will do it no more."

"Do not be ashamed of yourself; but yet do it no more."

"And then," he continued, without minding her words, "at other times I feel that it must be my own fault; that if I only persevered with sufficient energy I must be successful. At such times I swear that I will never give it up."

"Oh, John, if you could only know how little worthy of such pursuit it is."

"Leave me to judge of that, dear. When a man has taken a month, or perhaps only a week, or perhaps not more than half an hour, to make up his mind, it may be very well to tell him that he does n't know what he is about. I 've been in the office now for over seven years, and the first day I went I put an oath into a book that I would come back and get you for my wife when I had got enough to live upon."

"Did you, John?"

"Yes. I can show it you. I used to come and hover about the place in the old days, before I went to London, when I was such a fool that I could n't speak to you if I met you. I am speaking of a time long before,—before that man came down here."

"Do not speak of him, Johnny."

"I must speak of him. A man is n't to hold his tongue when everything he has in the world is at stake. I suppose he loved you after a fashion, once."

"Pray, pray do not speak ill of him."

"I am not going to abuse him. You can judge of him by his deeds. I cannot say anything worse of

him than what they say. I suppose he loved you; but he certainly did not love you as I have done. I have at any rate been true to you. Yes, Lily, I have been true to you. I am true to you. He did not know what he was about. I do. I am justified in saying that I do. I want you to be my wife. It is no use your talking about it as though I only half wanted it."

"I did not say that."

"Is not a man to have any reward? Of course if you had married him there would have been an end of it. He had come in between me and my happiness, and I must have borne it, as other men bear such sorrows. But you have not married him; and of course, I cannot but feel that I may yet have a chance. Lily, answer me this. Do you believe that I love you?" But she did not answer him. "You can at any rate tell me that. Do you think that I am in earnest?"

"Yes, I think you are in earnest."

"And do you believe that I love you with all my heart and all my strength and all my soul?"

"Oh, John!"

"But do you?"

"I think you love me."

"Think! What am I to say or to do to make you understand that my only idea of happiness is the idea that sooner or later I may get you to be my wife? Lily, will you say that it shall be so? Speak, Lily. There is no one that will not be glad. Your uncle will consent,—has consented. Your mother wishes it. Bell wishes it. My mother wishes it. Lady Julia wishes it. You would be doing what everybody wants you to do. And why should you not do it? It is n't that you dislike me. You would n't talk

about being my sister, if you had not some sort of regard for me."

"I have a regard for you."

"Then why will you not be my wife? Oh, Lily, say the word now, here, at once. Say the word, and you 'll make me the happiest fellow in all England." As he spoke he took her by both arms, and held her fast. She did not struggle to get away from him, but stood quite still, looking into his face, while the first sparkle of a salt tear formed itself in each eye. "Lily, one little word will do it,—half a word, a nod, a smile. Just touch my arm with your hand and I will take it for a yes." I think that she almost tried to touch him; that the word was in her throat and that she almost strove to speak it. But there was no syllable spoken, and her fingers did not loose themselves to fall upon his sleeve. "Lily, Lily, what can I say to you?"

"I wish I could," she whispered;—but the whisper was so hoarse that he hardly recognised the voice.

"And why can you not? What is there to hinder you? There is nothing to hinder you, Lily."

"Yes, John; there is that which must hinder me."

"And what is it?"

"I will tell you. You are so good and so true, and so excellent,—such a dear, dear, dear friend, that I will tell you everything, so that you may read my heart. I will tell you as I tell mamma,—you and her and no one else;—for you are the choice friend of my heart. I cannot be your wife because of the love I bear for another man."

"And that man is he,—he who came here?"

"Of course it is he. I think, Johnny, you and I are alike in this, that when we have loved we cannot bring

ourselves to change. You will not change, though it would be so much better you should do so."

"No; I will never change."

"Nor can I. When I sleep I dream of him. When I am alone I cannot banish him from my thoughts. I cannot define what it is to love him. I want nothing from him,—nothing, nothing. But I move about through my little world thinking of him, and I shall do so to the end. I used to feel proud of my love, though it made me so wretched that I thought it would kill me. I am not proud of it any longer. It is a foolish poor-spirited weakness,—as though my heart had been only half formed in the making. Do you be stronger, John. A man should be stronger than a woman."

"I have none of that sort of strength."

"Nor have I. What can we do but pity each other, and swear that we will be friends,—dear friends. There is the oak-tree, and I have got to turn back. We have said everything that we can say—unless you will tell me that you will be my brother."

"No; I will not tell you that."

"Good-bye, then, Johnny."

He paused, holding her by the hand and thinking of another question which he longed to put to her,—considering whether he would ask her that question or not. He hardly knew whether he were entitled to ask it;—whether or no the asking of it would be ungenerous. She had said that she would tell him everything,—as she had told everything to her mother. "Of course," he said, "I have no right to expect to know anything of your future intentions?"

"You may know them all,—as far as I know them myself. I have said that you should read my heart."

"If this man, whose name I cannot bear to mention, should come again——"

"If he were to come again he would come in vain, John." She did not say that he had come again. She could tell her own secret, but not that of another person.

"You would not marry him, now that he is free?"

She stood and thought awhile before she answered him. "No, I should not marry him now. I think not." Then she paused again. "Nay, I am sure I would not. After what has passed I could not trust myself to do it. There is my hand on it. I will not."

"No, Lily, I do not want that."

"But I insist. I will not marry Mr. Crosbie. But you must not misunderstand me, John. There;—all that is over for me now. All those dreams about love, and marriage, and of a house of my own, and children,—and a cross husband, and a wedding-ring growing always tighter as I grow fatter and older. I have dreamed of such things as other girls do,—more, perhaps, than other girls, more than I should have done. And now I accept the thing as finished. You wrote something in your book, you dear John,—something that could not be made to come true. Dear John, I wish for your sake it was otherwise. I will go home and I will write in my book, this very day, Lilian Dale, Old Maid. If ever I make that false, do you come and ask me for the page."

"Let it remain there till I am allowed to tear it out."

"I will write it, and it shall never be torn out. You I cannot marry. Him I will not marry. You may believe me, Johnny, when I say there can never be a third."

"And is that to be the end of it?"

"Yes;—that is to be the end of it. Not the end of our friendship. Old maids have friends."

"It shall not be the end of it. There shall be no end of it with me."

"But, John——"

"Do not suppose that I will trouble you again,—at any rate not for a while. In five years' time, perhaps——"

"Now, Johnny, you are laughing at me. And of course it is the best way. If there is not Grace, and she has caught me before I have turned back. Good-bye, dear, dear John. God bless you. I think you the finest fellow there is in this world. I do, and so does mamma. Remember always that there is a temple at Allington in which your worship is never forgotten." Then she pressed his hand and turned away from him to meet Grace Crawley. John did not stop to speak a word to his cousin, but pursued his way alone.

"That cousin of yours," said Lily, "is simply the dearest, warmest-hearted, finest creature that ever was seen in the shape of a man."

"Have you told him that you think him so?" said Grace.

"Indeed, I have," said Lily.

"But have you told this finest, warmest, dearest creature that he shall be rewarded with the prize he covets?"

"No, Grace. I have told him nothing of the kind. I think he understands it all now. If he does not, it is not for the want of my telling him. I don't suppose any lady was ever more open-spoken to a gentleman than I have been to him."

"And why have you sent him away disappointed? You know you love him."

"You see, my dear," said Lily, "you allow yourself, for the sake of your argument, to use a word in a double sense, and you attempt to confound me by doing so. But I am a great deal too clever for you, and have thought too much about it, to be taken in in that way. I certainly love your cousin John; and so I do love Mr. Boyce, the vicar."

"You love Johnny much better than you do Mr. Boyce."

"True; very much better; but it is the same sort of love. However, it is a great deal too deep for you to understand. You 're too young, and I shan't try to explain it. But the long and the short of it is,—I am not going to marry your cousin."

"I wish you were," said Grace, "with all my heart."

John Eames as he returned to the cottage was by no means able to fall back upon those resolutions as to his future life, which he had formed for himself and communicated to his friend Dalrymple and which he had intended to bring at once into force in the event of his being again rejected by Lily Dale. "I will cleanse my mind of it altogether," he had said, "and though I may not forget her, I will live as though she were forgotten. If she declines my proposal again, I will accept her word as final. I will not go about the world any longer as a stricken deer,—to be pitied or else bullied by the rest of the herd." On his way down to Guestwick he had sworn twenty times that it should be so. He would make one more effort, and then he would give it up. But now, after his interview with Lily, he was as little disposed to give it up as ever.

He sat upon a gate in a paddock through which there was a back entrance into Lady Julia's garden, and there swore a thousand oaths that he would never give her up. He was, at any rate, sure that she would never become the wife of any one else. He was equally sure that he would never become the husband of any other wife. He could trust her. Yes; he was sure of that. But could he trust himself? Communing with himself, he told himself that after all he was but a poor creature. Circumstances had been very good to him, but he had done nothing for himself. He was vain, and foolish, and unsteady. So he told himself while sitting upon the gate. But he had, at any rate, been constant to Lily, and constant he would remain.

He would never more mention her name to any one, —unless it were to Lady Julia to-night. To Dalrymple he would not open his mouth about her, but would plainly ask his friend to be silent on that subject if her name should be mentioned by him. But morning and evening he would pray for her, and in his prayers he would always think of her as his wife. He would never speak to another girl without remembering that he was bound to Lily. He would go nowhere into society without recalling to mind the fact that he was bound by the chains of a solemn engagement. If he knew himself he would be constant to Lily.

And then he considered in what manner it would be best and most becoming that he should still prosecute his endeavour and repeat his offer. He thought that he would write to her every year, on the same day of the year, year after year, it might be for the next twenty years. And his letters should be very simple.

Sitting there on the gate he planned the wording of his letters;—of his first letter, and of his second, and of his third. They should be very like to each other,—should hardly be more than a repetition of the same words,—"If now you are ready for me, then, Lily, am I, as ever, still ready for you." And then "if now" again, and again "if now;"—and still "if now." When his hair should be grey, and the wrinkles on his cheeks,—ay, though they should be on hers, he would still continue to tell her from year to year that he was ready to take her. Surely some day that "if now" would prevail. And should it never prevail, the merit of his constancy should be its own reward.

Such letters as those she would surely keep. Then he looked forward, down into the valley of coming years, and fancied her as she might sit reading them in the twilight of some long evening,—letters which had been written all in vain. He thought that he could look forward with some satisfaction towards the close of his own career, in having been the hero of such a love-story. At any rate, if such a story were to be his story, the melancholy attached to it should arise from no fault of his own. He would still press her to be his wife. And then as he remembered that he was only twenty-seven and that she was twenty-four, he began to marvel at the feeling of grey old age which had come upon him, and tried to make himself believe that he would have her yet before the bloom was off her cheek.

He went into the cottage and made his way at once into the room in which Lady Julia was sitting. She did not speak at first, but looked anxiously into his face. And he did not speak, but turned to a table

near the window and took up a book,—though the room was too dark for him to see to read the words. "John," at last said Lady Julia.

"Well, my lady?"

"Have you nothing to tell me, John?"

"Nothing on earth,—except the same old story, which has now become a matter of course."

"But, John, will you not tell me what she has said?"

"Lady Julia, she has said no; simply no. It is a very easy word to say, and she has said it so often that it seems to come from her quite naturally." Then he got a candle and sat down over the fire with a volume of a novel. It was not yet past five, and Lady Julia did not go upstairs to dress till six, and therefore there was an hour during which they were together. John had at first been rather grand to his old friend, and very uncommunicative. But before the dressing-bell had rung he had been coaxed into a confidential strain and had told everything. "I suppose it is wrong and selfish," he said. "I suppose I am a dog in a manger. But I do own that there is a consolation to me in the assurance that she will never be the wife of that scoundrel."

"I would never forgive her if she were to marry him now," said Lady Julia.

"I could never forgive him. But she has said that she will not, and I know that she will not forswear herself. I shall go on with it, Lady Julia. I have made up my mind to that. I suppose it will never come to anything, but I shall stick to it. I can live an old bachelor as well as another man. At any rate I shall stick to it." Then the good silly old woman comforted him and applauded him as though he were a hero

among men, and did reward him, as Lily had predicted, by one of those now rare bottles of superexcellent port which had come to her from her brother's cellar.

John Eames stayed out his time at the cottage, and went over more than once again to Allington, and called on the squire, on one occasion dining with him and meeting the three ladies from the Small House; and he walked with the girls, comporting himself like any ordinary man. But he was not again alone with Lily Dale, nor did he learn whether she had in truth written those two words in her book. But the reader may know that she did write them there on the evening of the day on which the promise was made. "Lilian Dale,—Old Maid."

And when John's holiday was over, he returned to his duties at the elbow of Sir Raffle Buffle.

CHAPTER VII.

GRACE CRAWLEY RETURNS HOME.

About this time Grace Crawley received two letters, the first of them reaching her while John Eames was still at the cottage, and the other immediately after his return to London. They both help to tell our story, and our reader shall, therefore, read them if he so please,—or, rather, he shall read the first and as much of the second as is necessary for him. Grace's answer to the first letter he shall see also. Her answer to the second will be told in a very few words. The first was from Major Grantly, and the task of answering that was by no means easy to Grace.

"Cosby Lodge, February, 186—.

"Dearest Grace,—I told you when I parted from you, that I should write to you, and I think it best to do so at once, in order that you may fully understand me. Spoken words are soon forgotten;"—"I shall never forget his words," Grace said to herself as she read this;—"and are not always as plain as they might be. Dear Grace, I suppose I ought not to say so, but I fancied when I parted from you at Allington that I had succeeded in making myself dear to you. I believe you to be so true in spirit, that you were unable

to conceal from me the fact that you love me. I shall believe that this is so, till I am deliberately and solemnly assured by yourself that it is not so; —and I conjure you to think what is due both to yourself and to myself, before you allow yourself to think of making such an assurance unless it be strictly true.

"I have already told my own friends that I have asked you to be my wife. I tell you this, in order that you may know how little effect your answer to me has had towards inducing me to give you up. What you said about your father and your family has no weight with me, and ought ultimately to have none with you. This business of your father's is a great misfortune,—so great that, probably, had we not known each other before it happened, it might have prevented our becoming intimate when we chanced to meet. But we had met before it happened, and before it happened I had determined to ask you to be my wife. What should I have to think of myself if I allowed my heart to be altered by such a cause as that?

"I have only further to say that I love you better than any one in the world, and that it is my best hope that you will be my wife. I will not press you till this affair of your father's has been settled; but when that is over I shall look for my reward without reference to its result. Not that I doubt the result if there be anything like justice in England; but that your debt to me, if you owe me any debt, will be altogether irrespective of that. If, as I suppose, you will remain at Allington for some time longer, I shall not see you till after the trial is over. As soon as that is done, I will come to you wherever you are. In the mean time

I shall look for an answer to this; and if it be true that you love me, dear, dear Grace, pray have the courage to tell me so.

"Most affectionately your own,

"HENRY GRANTLY."

When the letter was given to Grace across the breakfast-table, both Mrs. Dale and Lily suspected that it came from Major Grantly, but not a word was spoken about it. When Grace with hesitating hand broke the envelope, neither of her friends looked at her. Lily had a letter of her own, and Mrs. Dale opened the newspaper. But still it was impossible not to perceive that her face became red with blushes, and then they knew that the letter must be from Major Grantly. Grace herself could not read it, though her eye ran down over the two pages catching a word here and a word there. She had looked at the name at once, and had seen the manner of his signature. "Most affectionately your own!" What was she to say to him? Twice, thrice, as she sat at the breakfast-table she turned the page of the letter, and at each turning she read the signature. And she read the beginning, "Dearest Grace." More than that she did not really read till she had got the letter away with her into the seclusion of her own room.

Not a word was said about the letter at breakfast. Poor Grace went on eating or pretending to eat, but could not bring herself to utter a word. Mrs. Dale and Lily spoke of various matters, which were quite indifferent to them; but even with them the conversation was so difficult that Grace felt it to be forced, and was conscious that they were thinking about her

and her lover. As soon as she could make an excuse she left the room, and hurrying upstairs took the letter from her pocket and read it in earnest.

"That was from Major Grantly, mamma," said Lily.

"I dare say it was, my dear."

"And what had we better do; or what had we better say?"

"Nothing,—I should say. Let him fight his own battle. If we interfere, we may probably only make her more stubborn in clinging to her old idea."

"I think she will cling to it."

"For a time she will, I dare say. And it will be best that she should. He himself will respect her for it afterwards." Thus it was agreed between them that they should say nothing to Grace about the letter unless Grace should first speak to them.

Grace read her letter over and over again. It was the first love-letter she had ever had;—the first letter she had ever received from any man except her father and brother,—the first, almost, that had ever been written to her by any other than her own old special friends. The words of it were very strange to her ear. He had told her when he left her that he would write to her, and therefore she had looked forward to the event which had now come; but she had thought that it would be much more distant,—and she had tried to make herself believe that when it did come it would be very different from this letter which she now possessed. "He will tell me that he has altered his mind. He ought to do so. It is not proper that he should still think of me when we are in such disgrace." But now the letter had come, and she acknowledged the truth of his saying that written words were clearer in

their expression than those simply spoken. "Not that I could ever forget a syllable that he said." Yet, as she held the letter in her hand she felt that it was a possession. It was a thing at which she could look in coming years, when he and she might be far apart,—a thing at which she could look with pride in remembering that he had thought her worthy of it.

Neither on that day nor on the next did she think of her answer, nor on the third nor the fourth with any steady thinking She knew that an answer would have to be written, and she felt that the sooner it was written the easier might be the writing; but she felt also that it should not be written too quickly. A week should first elapse, she thought, and therefore a week was allowed to elapse, and then the day for writing her answer came. She had spoken no word about it either to Mrs. Dale or to Lily. She had longed to do so, but had feared. Even though she should speak to Lily she could not be led by Lily's advice. Her letter, whatever it might be, must be her own letter. She would admit of no dictation. She must say her own say, let her say it ever so badly. As to the manner of saying it, Lily's aid would have been invaluable; but she feared that she could not secure that aid without compromising her own power of action,—her own individuality, and therefore she said no word about the letter either to Lily or to Lily's mother.

On a certain morning she fixed herself at her desk to write her letter. She had known that the task would be difficult, but she had little known how difficult it would be. On that day of her first attempt she did not get it written at all. How was she to begin? He had called her "Dearest Grace;" and this mode of

beginning seemed as easy as it was sweet. "It is very easy for a gentleman," she said to herself, "because he may say just what he pleases." She wrote the words, "Dearest Henry," on a scrap of paper, and immediately tore it into fragments as though she were ashamed of having written them. She knew that she would not dare to send away a letter beginning with such words. She would not even have dared to let such words in her own handwriting remain within the recesses of her own little desk. "Dear Major Grantly," she began at length. It seemed to her to be very ugly, but after much consideration she believed it to be correct. On the second day the letter was written as follows;—

"Allington, Thursday.

"My dear Major Grantly,—I do not know how I ought to answer your kind letter, but I must tell you that I am very much flattered by your great goodness to me. I cannot understand why you should think so much of me, but I suppose it is because you have felt for all our misfortunes. I will not say anything about what might have happened, if it had not been for papa's sorrow and disgrace; and as far as I can help it, I will not think of it; but I am sure that I ought not to think about loving any one, that is, in the way you mean, while we are in such trouble at home. I should not dare to meet any of your great friends, knowing that I had brought nothing with me but disgrace. And I should feel that I was doing an injury to *dear* Edith, which would be worse to me than anything.

"Pray believe that I am quite in earnest about this. I know that a gentleman ought not to marry any girl

to do himself and his family an injury by it; and I know that if I were to make such a marriage I should be unhappy ever afterwards, even though I loved the man ever so dearly, with all my heart." These last words she had underscored at first, but the doing so had been the unconscious expression of her own affection, and had been done with no desire on her part to convey that expression to him. But on reading the words she discovered their latent meaning, and wrote it all again.

"Therefore I know that it will be best that I should wish you good-bye, and I do so, thanking you again and again for your goodness to me.

"Believe me to be,

"Yours very sincerely,

"GRACE CRAWLEY."

The letter when it was written was hateful to her; but she had tried her hand at it again and again, and had found that she could do nothing better. There was much in his letter that she had not attempted to answer. He had implored her to tell him whether or no she did in truth love him. Of course she loved him. He knew that well enough. Why should she answer any such question? There was a way of answering it indeed which might serve her turn,—or rather serve his, of which she was thinking more than of her own. She might say that she did not love him. It would be a lie, and he would know that it would be a lie. But still it might serve the turn. She did not like the idea of writing such a lie as that, but nevertheless she considered the matter. It would be very wicked; but still, if it would serve the turn, might it not be well to write it? But at last she reflected that, after all,

the doing of the thing was in her own hands. She could refuse to marry this man without burdening her conscience with any lie about it. It only required that she should be firm. She abstained, therefore, from the falsehood, and left her lover's question unanswered. So she put up her letter and directed it, and carried it herself to the village post-office.

On the day after this she got the second letter, and that she showed immediately to Mrs. Dale. It was from her mother, and was written to tell her that her father was seriously ill. "He went up to London to see a lawyer about this weary work of the trial," said Mrs. Crawley. "The fatigue was very great, and on the next day he was so weak that he could not leave his bed. Dr. Turner, who has been very kind, says that we need not frighten ourselves, but he thinks it must be some time before he can leave the house. He has a low fever on him, and wants nourishment. His mind has wandered once or twice, and he has asked for you, and I think it will be best, love, that you should come home. I know you will not mind it when I say that I think he would like to have you here. Dr. Turner says that the illness is chiefly owing to his not having proper food."

Of course she would go at once. "Dear Mrs. Dale," she said, "I must go home. Can you send me to the station?" Then Mrs. Dale read the letter. Of course they would send her. Would she go on that day, or on the next? Might it not be better to write first, and say that she was going? But Grace would go at once. "I know it will be a comfort to mamma; and I know that he is worse than mamma says." Of course there was no more to be said, and she was despatched to

the station. Before she went Mrs. Dale asked after her purse. "If there is any trouble about money,—for your journey, or anything, you will not scruple to come to me as to an old friend." But Grace assured her that there was no trouble about money—for her journey. Then Lily took her aside and produced two clean new five-pound notes. "Grace, dear, you won't be ill-natured. You know I have a little fortune of my own. You know I can give them without missing them." Grace threw herself into her friend's arms and wept, but would have none of her money. "Buy a present from me for your mother,—whom I love though I do not know her." "I will give her your love," Grace said, "but nothing else." And then she went.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOOK COURT.

Mr. Dobbs Broughton and Mr. Musselboro were sitting together on a certain morning at their office in the City, discussing the affairs of their joint business. The City office was a very poor place indeed, in comparison with the fine house which Mr. Dobbs occupied at the West End; but then City offices are poor places, and there are certain City occupations which seem to enjoy the greater credit the poorer are the material circumstances by which they are surrounded. Turning out of a lane which turns out of Lombard Street, there is a desolate, forlorn-looking, dark alley, which is called Hook Court. The entrance to this alley is beneath the first floor of one of the houses in the lane, and in passing under this covered way the visitor to the place finds himself in a small paved square court, at the two further corners of which there are two open doors; for in Hook Court there are only two houses. There is No. 1, Hook Court, and No. 2, Hook Court. The entire premises indicated by No. 1, are occupied by a firm of wine and spirit merchants, in connection with whose trade one side and two angles of the court are always lumbered with crates, hampers, and wooden cases. And nearly in the middle of the court, though somewhat more to the wine-merchants' side than to the

other, there is always gaping open a trap-door, leading down to vaults below; and over the trap there is a great board with a bright advertisement in very large letters:—

BURTON AND BANGLES.
HIMALAYA WINES.
22s. 6d. per dozen.

And this notice is so bright and so large, and the trap-door is so conspicuous in the court, that no visitor, even to No. 2, ever afterwards can quite divest his memory of those names, Burton and Bangles, Himalaya wines. It may therefore be acknowledged that Burton and Bangles have achieved their object in putting up the notice. The house No. 2, small as it seems to be, standing in the jamb of a corner, is divided among different occupiers, whose names are painted in small letters upon the very dirty posts of the doorway. Nothing can be more remarkable than the contrast between Burton and Bangles and these other City gentlemen in the method taken by them in declaring their presence to visitors in the court. The names of Dobbs Broughton and of A. Musselboro,—the Christian name of Mr. Musselboro was Augustus,—were on one of those dirty posts, not joined together by any visible "and," so as to declare boldly that they were partners; but in close vicinity,—showing at least that the two gentlemen would be found in apartments very near to each other. And on the first-floor of this house Dobbs Broughton and his friend did occupy three rooms,—or rather two rooms and a closet—between them. The larger and front room was tenanted by an old clerk,

who sat within a rail in one corner of it. And there was a broad, short counter which jutted out from the wall into the middle of the room, intended for the use of such of the public as might come to transact miscellaneous business with Dobbs Broughton or Augustus Musselboro. But any one accustomed to the look of offices might have seen with half an eye that very little business was ever done on that counter. Behind this large room was a smaller one, belonging to Dobbs Broughton, in the furnishing and arrangement of which some regard had been paid to comfort. The room was carpeted, and there was a sofa in it, though a very old one, and two arm-chairs and a mahogany office-table, and a cellaret, which was generally well supplied with wine which Dobbs Broughton did not get out of the vaults of his neighbours, Burton and Bangles. Behind this, again, but with a separate entrance from the passage, was the closet; and this closet was specially devoted to the use of Mr. Musselboro. Closet as it was,—or cupboard as it might almost have been called,—it contained a table and two chairs; and it had a window of its own, which opened out upon a blank wall which was distant from it not above four feet. As the house to which this wall belonged was four stories high, it would sometimes happen that Mr. Musselboro's cupboard was rather dark. But this mattered the less as in these days Mr. Musselboro seldom used it. Mr. Musselboro, who was very constant at his place of business,—much more constant than his friend, Dobbs Broughton,—was generally to be found in his friend's room. Only on some special occasions, on which it was thought expedient that the commercial world should be made to understand that Mr. Augustus Musselboro

had an individual existence of his own, did that gentleman really seat himself in the dark closet. Mr. Dobbs Broughton, had he been asked what was his trade, would have said that he was a stockbroker; and he would have answered truly, for he was a stockbroker. A man may be a stockbroker though he never sells any stock; as he may be a barrister though he has no practice at the bar. I do not say that Mr. Broughton never sold any stock; but the buying and selling of stock for other people was certainly not his chief business. And had Mr. Musselboro been asked what was his trade, he would have probably given an evasive answer. At any rate in the City, and among people who understood City matters, he would not have said that he was a stockbroker. Both Mr. Broughton and Mr. Musselboro bought and sold a good deal, but it was chiefly on account. The shares which were bought and sold very generally did not pass from hand to hand; but the difference in the price of the shares did do so. And then they had another little business between them. They lent money on interest. And in this business there was a third partner, whose name did not appear on the dirty door-post. That third partner was Mrs. Van Siever, the mother of Clara Van Siever whom Mr. Conway Dalrymple intended to portray as Jael driving a nail into Sisera's head.

On a certain morning Mr. Broughton and Mr. Musselboro were sitting together in the office which has been described. They were in Mr. Broughton's room, and occupied each an arm-chair on the different sides of the fire. Mr. Musselboro was sitting close to the table, on which a ledger was open before him, and he had a pen and ink before him, as though he had been

at work. Dobbs Broughton had a small betting-book in his hand, and was seated with his feet up against the side of the fireplace. Both men wore their hats, and the aspect of the room was not the aspect of a place of business. They had been silent for some minutes when Broughton took his cigar-case out of his pocket, and nibbled off the end of a cigar, preparatory to lighting it.

"You had better not smoke here this morning, Dobbs," said Musselboro.

"Why should n't I smoke in my own room?"

"Because she 'll be here just now."

"What do I care? If you think I 'm going to be afraid of Mother Van, you 're mistaken. Let come what may, I 'm not going to live under her thumb." So he lighted his cigar.

"All right," said Musselboro, and he took up his pen and went to work at his book.

"What is she coming here for this morning?" asked Broughton.

"To look after her money. What should she come for?"

"She gets her interest. I don't suppose there 's better paid money in the City."

"She has n't got what was coming to her at Christmas yet."

"And this is February. What would she have? She had better put her dirty money into the three per cents., if she is frightened at having to wait a week or two."

"Can she have it to-day?"

"What, the whole of it? Of course she can't. You know that as well as I do. She can have four hundred pounds if she wants it. But seeing all she gets

out of the concern she has no right to press for it in that way. She is the —— old usurer I ever came across in my life."

"Of course she likes her money."

"Likes her money! By George, she does; her own and anybody else's that she can get hold of. For a downright leech, recommend me always to a woman. When a woman does go in for it, she is much more thorough than any man." Then Broughton turned over the little pages of his book, and Musselboro pondered over the big pages of his book, and there was silence for a quarter of an hour.

"There 's something about nine hundred and fifteen pounds due to her," said Musselboro.

"I dare say there is."

"It would be a very good thing to let her have it if you 've got it. The whole of it this morning, I mean."

"If! yes, if!" said Broughton.

"I know there 's more than that at the bank."

"And I 'm to draw out every shilling that there is! I 'll see Mother Van—further first. She can have five hundred pounds if she likes it,—and the rest in a fortnight. Or she can have my note-of-hand for it all at fourteen days."

"She won't like that at all," said Musselboro.

"Then she must lump it. I 'm not going to bother myself about her. I 've pretty nearly as much money in it as she has, and we 're in a boat together. If she comes here bothering, you 'd better tell her so."

"You 'll see her yourself?"

"Not unless she comes within the next ten minutes. I must go down to the court. I said I 'd be there by twelve. I 've got somebody I want to see."

"I 'd stay if I were you."

"Why should I stay for her? If she thinks that I 'm going to make myself her clerk, she 's mistaken. It may be all very well for you, Mussy, but it won't do for me. I 'm not dependent on her, and I don't want to marry her daughter."

"It will simply end in her demanding to have her money back again."

"And how will she get it?" said Dobbs Broughton. "I have n't a doubt in life but she 'd take it to-morrow if she could put her hands upon it. And then, after a bit, when she began to find that she did n't like four per cent., she 'd bring it back again. But nobody can do business after such a fashion as that. For the last three years she 's drawn close upon two thousand a year for less than eighteen thousand pounds. When a woman wants to do that, she can't have her money in her pocket every Monday morning."

"But you 've done better than that yourself, Dobbs."

"Of course I have. And who has made the connection? and who has done the work? I suppose she does n't think that I 'm to have all the sweat and that she is to have all the profit."

"If you talk of work, Dobbs, it is I that have done the most of it." This Mr. Musselboro said in a very serious voice, and with a look of much reproach.

"And you 've been paid for what you 've done. Come, Mussy, you 'd better not turn against me. You 'll never get your change out of that. Even if you marry the daughter, that won't give you the mother's money. She 'll stick to every shilling of it till she dies; and she 'd take it with her then, if she knew how." Having said this, he got up from his chair, put

his little book into his pocket, and walked out of the office. He pushed his way across the court, which was more than ordinarily crowded with the implements of Burton and Bangles' trade, and as he passed under the covered way he encountered at the entrance an old woman getting out of a cab. The old woman was, of course, Mother Van, as her partner, Mr. Dobbs Broughton, irreverently called her. "Mrs. Van Siever, how d'ye do? Let me give you a hand. Fare from South Kensington? I always give the fellows three shillings."

"You don't mean to tell me it 's six miles?" And she tendered a florin to the man.

"Can't take that, ma'am," said the cabman.

"Can't take it! But you must take it. Broughton, just get a policeman, will you?" Dobbs Broughton satisfied the driver out of his own pocket, and the cab was driven away. "What did you give him?" said Mrs. Van Siever.

"Just another sixpence. There never is a policeman anywhere about here."

"It 'll be out of your own pocket, then," said Mrs. Van. "But you 're not going away?"

"I must be at Capel Court by half-past twelve;—I must, indeed. If it was n't real business, I 'd stay."

"I told Musselboro I should be here."

"He 's up there, and he knows all about the business just as well as I do. When I found that I could n't stay for you, I went through the account with him, and it 's all settled. Good-morning. I 'll see you at the West End in a day or two." Then he made his way out into Lombard Street, and Mrs. Van Siever picked her steps across the yard, and mounted the

stairs, and made her way into the room in which Mr. Musselboro was sitting.

"Somebody 's been smoking, Gus," she said, almost as soon as she had entered the room.

"That 's nothing new here," he replied, as he got up from his chair.

"There 's no good being done when men sit and smoke over their work. Is it you, or he, or both of you?"

"Well;—it was Broughton was smoking just now. I don't smoke of a morning myself."

"What made him get up and run away when I came?"

"How can I tell, Mrs. Van Siever?" said Musselboro laughing. "If he did run away when you came, I suppose it was because he did n't want to see you."

"And why should n't he want to see me? Gus, I expect the truth from you. How are things going on here?" To this question Mr. Musselboro made no immediate answer; but tilted himself back in his chair and took his hat off, and put his thumbs into the armholes of his waistcoat, looking his patroness full in the face. "Gus," she said again, "I do expect the truth from you. How are things going on here?"

"There 'd be a good business,—if he 'd only keep things together."

"But he 's idle. Is n't he idle?"

"Confoundedly idle," said Musselboro.

"And he drinks;—don't he drink in the day?"

"Like the mischief,—some days. But that is n't the worst of it."

"And what is the worst of it?"

"Newmarket;—that 's the rock he 's going to pieces on."

"You don't mean to say he takes the money out of the business for that?" And Mrs. Van Siever's face, as she asked the question, expressed almost a tragic horror. "If I thought [illegible] I would n't give him an hour's mercy."

"When a man bets he does n't well know what money he uses. I can't say that he takes money that is not his own. Situated as I am, I don't know what is his own and what is n't. If your money was in my name I could keep a hand on it;—but as it is not I can do nothing. I can see that what is put out is put out fairly well; and when I think of it, Mrs. Van Siever, it is quite wonderful that we 've lost so little. It has been next to nothing. That has been my doing;—and that 's about all that I can do."

"You must know whether he has used my money for his own purposes or not."

"If you ask me, I think he has," said Mr. Musselboro.

"Then I 'll go into it, and I 'll find it out, and if it is so, as sure as my name 's Van Siever, I 'll sew him up." Having uttered which terrible threat, the old woman drew a chair to the table and seated herself fairly down, as though she were determined to go through all the books of the office before she quitted that room. Mrs. Van Siever in her present habiliments was not a thing so terrible to look at as she had been in her wiggeries at Mrs. Dobbs Broughton's dinner-table. Her curls were laid aside altogether, and she wore simply a front beneath her close bonnet,—and a very old front, too, which was not loudly offensive be-

cause it told no lies. Her eyes were as bright, and her little wizen face was as sharp, as ever; but the wizen face and the bright eyes were not so much amiss as seen together with the old dark brown silk dress which she now wore, as they had been with the wiggeries and the evening finery. Even now, in her morning costume, in her work-a-day business dress, as we may call it, she looked to be very old,—so old that nobody could guess her age. People attempting to guess would say that she must be at least over eighty. And yet she was wiry, and strong, and nimble. It was not because she was feeble that she was thought to be so old. They who so judged of her were led to their opinion by the extreme thinness of her face, and by the brightness of her eyes, joined to the depth of the hollows in which they lay, and the red margin by which they were surrounded. It was not really the fact that Mrs. Van Siever was so very aged, for she had still some years to live before she would reach eighty, but that she was such a weird old woman, so small, so ghastly, and so ugly! "I 'll sew him up, if he 's been robbing me," she said. "I will, indeed." And she stretched out her hand to grab at the ledger which Musselboro had been using.

"You won't understand anything from that," said he, pushing the book over to her.

"You can explain it to me."

"That 's all straight sailing, that is."

"And where does he keep the figures that ain't straight sailing? That 's the book I want to see."

"There is no such book."

"Look here, Gus,—if I find you deceiving me I 'll throw you overboard as sure as I 'm a living woman.

I will indeed. I 'll have no mercy. I 've stuck to you and made a man of you, and I expect you to stick to me."

"Not much of a man," said Musselboro, with a touch of scorn in his voice.

"You 've never had a shilling yet but what I gave you."

"Yes; I have. I 've had what I 've worked for,—and worked confounded hard too."

"Look here, Musselboro: if you 're going to throw me over, just tell me so, and let us begin fair."

"I 'm not going to throw you over. I 've always been on the square with you. Why don't you trust me out and out, and then I could do a deal better for you. You ask me now about your money. I don't know about your money, Mrs. Van Siever. How am I to know anything about your money, Mrs. Van Siever? You don't give me any power of keeping a hand upon Dobbs Broughton. I suppose you have security from Dobbs Broughton, but I don't know what security you have, Mrs. Van Siever. He owes you now 915*l.* 16*s.* 2*d.* on last year's account!"

"Why does n't he give me a cheque for the money?"

"He says he can't spare it. You may have five hundred pounds, and the rest when he can give it you. Or he 'll give you his note-of-hand at fourteen days for the whole."

"Bother his note-of-hand. Why should I take his note-of-hand?"

"Do as you like, Mrs. Van Siever."

"It 's the interest on my own money. Why don't he give it me? I suppose he has had it."

"You must ask him that, Mrs. Van Siever. You 're

in partnership with him, and he can tell you. Nobody else knows anything about it. If you were in partnership with me, then of course I could tell you. But you 're not. You 've never trusted me, Mrs. Van Siever."

The lady remained there closeted with Mr. Musselboro for an hour after that, and did, I think, at length learn something more as to the details of her partner's business, than her faithful servant Mr. Musselboro had at first found himself able to give to her. And at last they came to friendly and confidential terms, in the midst of which the personal welfare of Mr. Dobbs Broughton was, I fear, somewhat forgotten. Not that Mr. Musselboro palpably and plainly threw his friend overboard. He took his friend's part,—alleging excuses for him, and pleading some facts. "Of course, you know, a man like that is fond of pleasure, Mrs. Van Siever. He 's been at it more or less all his life. I don't suppose he ever missed a Derby, or an Oaks, or the cup at Ascot, or the Goodwood in his life."

"He 'll have to miss them before long, I 'm thinking," said Mrs. Van Siever.

"And as to not cashing up, you must remember, Mrs. Van Siever, that ten per cent. won't come in quite as regularly as four or five. When you go for high interest, there must be hitches here and there. There must, indeed, Mrs. Van Siever."

"I know all about it," said Mrs. Van Siever. "If he gave it me as soon as he got it himself, I should n't complain. Never mind. He 's only got to give me my little bit of money out of the business, and then he and I will be all square. You come and see Clara this evening, Gus."

Then Mr. Musselboro put Mrs. Van Siever into another cab, and went out upon 'Change,—hanging about the Bank, and standing in Threadneedle Street, talking to other men just like himself. When he saw Dobbs Broughton he told that gentleman that Mrs. Van Siever had been in her tantrums, but that he had managed to pacify her before she left Hook Court. "I 'm to take her the cheque for the five hundred to-night," he said.

CHAPTER IX.

JAEL.

On the first of March Conway Dalrymple's easel was put up in Mrs. Dobbs Broughton's boudoir upstairs, the canvas was placed upon it on which the outlines of Jael and Sisera had been already drawn, and Mrs. Broughton and Clara Van Siever and Conway Dalrymple were assembled with the view of steady artwork. But before we see how they began their work together we will go back for a moment to John Eames on his return to his London lodgings. The first thing every man does when he returns after an absence is to look at his letters, and John Eames looked at his. There were not very many. There was a note marked immediate, from Sir Raffle Buffle, in which Sir R. had scrawled in four lines a notification that he should be driven to an extremity of inconvenience if Eames were not at his post at half-past nine on the following morning. "I think I see myself there at that hour," said John. There was a notification of a house dinner, which he was asked to join, at his club, and a card for an evening gathering at Lady Glencora Palliser's,—procured for him by his friend Conway,—and an invitation to dinner at the house of his uncle, Mr. Toogood; and there was a scented note in the handwriting of a lady which he did not recognise. "My near-

est and dearest friend, M. D. M.," he said, as he opened the note and looked at the signature. Then he read the letter, which was from Miss Demolines.

"My dear Mr. Eames,—Pray come to me at once. I know that you are to be back to-morrow. Do not lose an hour if you can help it. I shall be at home at half-past five. I fear what you know of has been begun. But it certainly shall not go on. In one way or other it must be prevented. I won't say another word till I see you, but pray come at once.

"Yours always,

"M. D. M."

"Thursday.

"Poor mamma is n't very well, so you had better ask for me."

"Beautiful!" said Johnny, as he read the note. "There 's nothing I like so much as a mystery,—especially if it 's about nothing. I wonder why she is so desperately anxious that the picture should not be painted. I 'd ask Dalrymple, only I should spoil the mystery." Then he sat himself down, and began to think of Lily. There could be no treason to Lily in his amusing himself with the freaks of such a woman as Miss Demolines.

At eleven o'clock on the morning of the 1st of March,—the day following that on which Miss Demolines had written her note,—the easel was put up and the canvas was placed on it in Mrs. Broughton's room. Mrs. Broughton and Clara were both there, and when they had seen the outlines as far as it had been drawn, they proceeded to make arrangements for their future

operations. The period of work was to begin always at eleven, and was to be continued for an hour and a half or for two hours on the days on which they met. I fear that there was a little improper scheming in this against the two persons whom the ladies were bound to obey. Mr. Dobbs Broughton invariably left his house soon after ten in the morning. It would sometimes happen, though not frequently, that he returned home early in the day,—at four, perhaps, or even before that; and should he chance to do so while the picture was going on, he would catch them at their work if the work were postponed till after luncheon. And then again, Mrs. Van Siever would often go out in the morning, and when she did so, would always go without her daughter. On such occasions she went into the City, or to other resorts of business, at which, in some manner quite unintelligible to her daughter, she looked after her money. But when she did not go out in the morning, she did go out in the afternoon, and she would then require her daughter's company. There was some place to which she always went of a Friday morning, and at which she stayed for two or three hours. Friday therefore was a fitting day on which to begin the work at Mrs. Broughton's house. All this was explained between the three conspirators. Mrs. Dobbs Broughton declared that if she entertained the slightest idea that her husband would object to the painting of the picture in her room, nothing on earth would induce her to lend her countenance to it; but yet it might be well not to tell him just at first,—perhaps not till the sittings were over,—perhaps not till the picture was finished; as, otherwise, tidings of the picture might get round to ears which were not in-

tended to hear it. "Poor dear Dobbs is so careless with a secret."

Miss Van Siever explained her motives in a very different way. "I know mamma would not let me do it if she knew it, and therefore I shall not tell her."

"My dear Clara," said Mrs. Broughton with a smile, "you are so outspoken!"

"And why not?" said Miss Van Siever. "I am old enough to judge for myself. If mamma does not want to be deceived, she ought not to treat me like a child. Of course she 'll find it out sooner or later; but I don't care about that."

Conway Dalrymple said nothing as the two ladies were thus excusing themselves.

"How delightful it must be not to have a master," said Mrs. Broughton, addressing him.

"But then a man has to work for his own bread," said he. "I suppose it comes about equal in the long run."

Very little drawing or painting was done on that day. In the first place it was necessary that the question of costume should be settled, and both Mrs. Broughton and the artist had much to say on the subject. It was considered proper that Jael should be dressed as a Jewess, and there came to be much question how Jewesses dressed themselves in those early days. Mrs. Broughton had prepared her jewels and raiment of many colours, but the painter declared that the wife of Heber the Kenite would have no jewels. But when Mrs. Broughton discovered from her Bible that Heber had been connected by family ties with Moses, she was more than ever sure that Heber's wife would have in her tent much of the spoilings of the

Egyptians. And when Clara Van Siever suggested that at any rate she would not have worn them in a time of confusion when soldiers were loose, flying about the country, Mrs. Broughton was quite confident that she would have put them on before she invited the captain of the enemy's host into her tent. The artist at last took the matter into his own hand by declaring that Miss Van Siever would sit the subject much better without jewels, and therefore all Mrs. Broughton's gewgaws were put back into their boxes. And then on four different times the two ladies had to retire into Mrs. Broughton's room in order that Jael might be arrayed in various costumes,—and in each costume she had to kneel down, taking the hammer in her hand and holding the pointed stick which had been prepared to do duty as the nail, upon the forehead of a dummy Sisera. At last it was decided that her raiment should be altogether white, and that she should wear, twisted round her head and falling over her shoulder, a Roman silk scarf of various colours. "Where Jael could have gotten it I don't know," said Clara. "You may be sure that there were lots of such things among the Egyptians," said Mrs. Broughton, "and that Moses brought away all the best for his own family."

"And who is to be Sisera?" asked Mrs. Broughton in one of the pauses in their work.

"I am thinking of asking my friend John Eames to sit."

"Of course we cannot sit together," said Miss Van Siever.

"There 's no reason why you should," said Dalrymple. "I can do the second figure in my own

room." Then there was a bargain made that Sisera should not be a portrait. "It would never do," said Mrs. Broughton, shaking her head very gravely.

Though there was really very little done to the picture on that day, the work was commenced; and Mrs. Broughton, who had at first objected strongly to the idea, and who had said twenty times that it was quite out of the question that it should be done in her house, became very eager in her delight about it. Nobody should know anything of the picture till it should be exhibited. That would be best. And it should be the picture of the year! She was a little heart-broken when Dalrymple assured her that it could not possibly be finished for exhibition in that May; but she came to again when he declared that he meant to put out all his strength upon it. "There will be five or six months' work in it," he said. "Will there, indeed? And how much work was there in 'The Graces?'" "The Graces," as will perhaps be remembered, was the triple portrait of Mrs. Dobbs Broughton herself. This question the artist did not answer with absolute accuracy, but contented himself with declaring that with such a model as Mrs. Broughton the picture had been comparatively easy.

Mrs. Broughton, having no doubt that ultimate object of which she had spoken to her friend Conway steadily in view, took occasion before the sitting was over to leave the room, so that the artist might have an opportunity of speaking a word in private to his model,—if he had any such word to speak. And Mrs. Broughton, as she did this, felt that she was doing her duty as a wife, a friend, and a Christian. She was doing her duty as a wife, because she was giving the

clearest proof in the world,—the clearest at any rate to herself,—that the intimacy between herself and her friend Conway had in it nothing that was improper. And she was doing her duty as a friend, because Clara Van Siever, with her large expectations, would be an eligible wife. And she was doing her duty as a Christian, because the whole thing was intended to be moral. Miss Demolines had declared that her friend Maria Clutterbuck,—as Miss Demolines delighted to call Mrs. Broughton, in memory of dear old innocent days, —had high principles; and the reader will see that she was justified in her declaration. "It will be better so," said Mrs. Broughton, as she sat upon her bed and wiped a tear from the corner of her eye. "Yes; it will be better so. There is a pang. Of course there 's a pang. But it will be better so." Acting upon this high principle, she allowed Conway Dalrymple five minutes to say what he had to say to Clara Van Siever. Then she allowed herself to indulge in some very savage feelings in reference to her husband, —accusing her husband in her thoughts of great cruelty, —nay, of brutality, because of certain sharp words that he had said as to Conway Dalrymple. "But of course he can't understand," said Mrs. Broughton to herself. "How is it to be expected that he should understand?"

But she allowed her friend on this occasion only five minutes, thinking probably that so much might suffice. A woman, when she is jealous, is apt to attribute to the other woman with whom her jealousy is concerned both weakness and timidity, and to the man both audacity and strength. A woman who has herself taken perhaps twelve months in the winning, will think that another woman is to be won in five minutes. It is

not to be supposed that Mrs. Dobbs Broughton had ever been won by any one except by Mr. Dobbs Broughton. At least, let it not be supposed that she had ever acknowledged a spark of love for Conway Dalrymple. But nevertheless there was enough of jealousy in her present mood to make her think poorly of Miss Van Siever's capacity for standing a siege against the artist's eloquence. Otherwise, having left the two together with the object which she had acknowledged to herself, she would hardly have returned to them after so very short an interval.

"I hope you won't dislike the trouble of all this?" said Dalrymple to his model, as soon as Mrs. Broughton was gone.

"I cannot say that I like it very much," said Miss Van Siever.

"I am afraid it will be a bore;—but I hope you 'll go through with it."

"I shall if I am not prevented," said Miss Van Siever. "When I 've said that I 'll do a thing I like to do it."

There was a pause in the conversation, which took up a considerable portion of the five minutes. Miss Van Siever was not holding her nail during these moments, but was sitting in a common-place way on her chair, while Dalrymple was scraping his palette. "I wonder what it was that first induced you to sit?" said he.

"Oh, I don't know. I took a fancy for it."

"I 'm very glad you did take the fancy. You 'll make an excellent model. If you won't mind posing again for a few minutes—I will not weary you to-day. Your right arm a little more forward."

"But I should tumble down."

"Not if you lean well on to the nail."

"But that would have woken Sisera before she had struck a blow."

"Never mind that. Let us try it." Then Mrs. Broughton returned, with that pleasant feeling in her bosom of having done her duty as a wife, a friend, and a Christian. "Mrs. Broughton," continued the painter, "just steady Miss Van Siever's shoulder with your hand; and now bring the arm and the elbow a little more forward."

"But Jael did not have a friend to help her in that way," said Miss Van Siever.

At the end of an hour and a half the two ladies retired, and Jael disrobed herself, and Miss Van Siever put on her customary raiment. It was agreed among them that they had commenced their work auspiciously, and that they would meet again on the following Monday. The artist begged to be allowed an hour to go on with his work in Mrs. Broughton's room, and the hour was conceded to him. It was understood that he could not take the canvas backwards and forwards with him to his own house, and he pointed out that no progress whatever could be made, unless he were occasionally allowed some such grace as this. Mrs. Broughton doubted and hesitated, made difficulties, and lifted up her hands in despair. "It is easy for you to say, Why not? but I know very well why not." But at last she gave way. "Honi soit qui mal y pense," she said; "that must be my protection." So she followed Miss Van Siever downstairs, leaving Mr. Dalrymple in possession of her boudoir. "I shall give you just one hour," she said, "and then I shall come

and turn you out." So she went down, and, as Miss Van Siever would not stay to lunch with her, she ate her lunch by herself, sending a glass of sherry and a biscuit up to the poor painter at his work.

Exactly at the end of the hour she returned to him. "Now, Conway, you must go," she said.

"But why in such a hurry?"

"Because I say that it must be so. When I say so, pray let that be sufficient." But still Dalrymple went on working. "Conway," she said, "how can you treat me with so much disdain?"

"Disdain, Mrs. Broughton!"

"Yes, disdain. Have I not begged you to understand that I cannot allow you to remain here, and yet you pay no attention to my wishes."

"I have done now;" and he began to put his brushes and paints together. "I suppose all these things may remain here?"

"Yes; they may remain. They must do so, of course. There; if you will put the easel in the corner, with the canvas behind it, they will not be seen if he should chance to come into the room."

"He would not be angry, I suppose, if he saw them?"

"There is no knowing. Men are so unreasonable. All men are, I think. All those are whom I have had the fortune to know. Women generally say that men are selfish. I do not complain so much that they are selfish as that they are thoughtless. They are headstrong, and do not look forward to results. Now you,—I do not think you would willingly do me an injury?"

"I do not think I would."

"I am sure you would not; but yet you would forget to save me from one."

"What injury?"

"Oh, never mind. I am not thinking of anything in particular. From myself, for instance. But we will not talk about that. That way madness lies. Tell me, Conway;—what do you think of Clara Van Siever?"

"She is very handsome, certainly."

"And clever?"

"Decidedly clever. I should think she has a temper of her own."

"What woman is there worth a straw that has not? If Clara Van Siever were ill-used, she would resent it. I do not doubt that for a moment. I should not like to be the man who would do it."

"Nor I, either," said Conway.

"But there is plenty of feminine softness in that character, if she were treated with love and kindness. Conway, if you will take my advice you will ask Clara Van Siever to be your wife. But perhaps you have already?"

"Who; I?"

"Yes; you."

"I have not done it yet, certainly, Mrs. Broughton."

"And why should you not do it?"

"There are two or three reasons;—but perhaps none of any great importance. Do you know of none, Mrs. Broughton?"

"I know of none," said Mrs. Broughton, in a very serious,—in almost a tragic tone;—"of none that should weigh for a moment. As far as I am concerned, nothing would give me more pleasure."

"That is so kind of you!"

"I mean to be kind. I do, indeed, Conway. I

know it will be better for you that you should be settled,—very much better. And it will be better for me. I do not mind admitting that; though in saying so I trust greatly to your generosity to interpret my words properly."

"I shall not flatter myself, if you mean that."

"There is no question of flattery, Conway. The question is simply of truth and prudence. Do you not know that it would be better that you should be married?"

"Not unless a certain gentleman were to die first," said Conway Dalrymple, as he deposited the last of his painting paraphernalia in the recess which had been prepared for them by Mrs. Broughton.

"Conway, how can you speak in that wicked, wicked way!"

"I can assure you I do not wish the gentleman in question the slightest harm in the world. If his welfare depended on me, he should be as safe as the Bank of England."

"And you will not take my advice?"

"What advice?"

"About Clara?"

"Mrs. Broughton, matrimony is a very important thing."

"Indeed, it is;—oh, who can say how important! There was a time, Conway, when I thought you had given your heart to Madalina Demolines."

"Heaven forbid!"

"And I grieved, because I thought that she was not worthy of you."

"There was never anything in that, Mrs. Broughton."

"She thought that there was. At any rate, she said

so. I know that for certain. She told me so herself. But let that pass. Clara Van Siever is in every respect very different from Madalina. Clara, I think, is worthy of you. And, Conway,—of course it is not for me to dictate to you; but this I must tell you——" Then she paused, as though she did not know how to finish her sentence.

"What must you tell me?"

"I will tell you nothing more. If you cannot understand what I have said, you must be more dull of comprehension than I believe you to be. Now go. Why are you not gone this half-hour?"

"How could I go while you were giving me all this good advice?"

"I have not asked you to stay. Go now, at any rate. And, remember, Conway, if this picture is to go on, I will not have you remaining here after the work is done. Will you remember that?" And she held him by the hand while he declared that he would remember it.

Mrs. Dobbs Broughton was no more in love with Conway Dalrymple than she was in love with King Charles on horse-back at Charing Cross. And, over and beyond the protection which came to her in the course of nature from unimpassioned feelings in this special phase of her life,—and indeed, I may say, in every phase of her life,—it must be acknowledged on her behalf that she did enjoy that protection which comes from what we call principle,—though the principle was not perhaps very high of its kind. Madalina Demolines had been right when she talked of her friend Maria's principles. Dobbs Broughton had been so far lucky in that jump in the dark which he made

in taking a wife to himself, that he had not fallen upon a really vicious woman, or upon a woman of strong feeling. If it had come to be the lot of Mrs. Dobbs Broughton to have six hours' work to do every day of her life, I think that the work would have been done badly, but that it would have kept her free from all danger. As it was, she had nothing to do. She had no child. She was not given to much reading. She could not sit with a needle in her hand all day. She had no aptitude for May meetings, or the excitement of charitable good works. Life with her was very dull, and she found no amusement within her reach so easy and so pleasant as the amusement of pretending to be in love. If all that she did and all that she said could only have been taken for its worth and for nothing more, by the different persons concerned, there was very little in it to flatter Mr. Dalrymple or to give cause for tribulation to Mr. Broughton. She probably cared but little for either of them. She was one of those women to whom it is not given by nature to care very much for anybody. But, of the two, she certainly cared the most for Mr. Dobbs Broughton,—because Mr. Dobbs Broughton belonged to her. As to leaving Mr. Dobbs Broughton's house, and putting herself into the hands of another man,—no Imogen of a wife was ever less likely to take a step so wicked, so dangerous, and so generally disagreeable to all the parties concerned.

But Conway Dalrymple,—though now and again he had got a side glance at her true character with clear-seeing eyes,—did allow himself to be flattered and deceived. He knew that she was foolish and ignorant, and that she often talked wonderful nonsense. He

knew that she was continually contradicting herself,—as when she would strenuously beg him to leave her, while she would continue to talk to him in a strain that prevented the possibility of his going. But, nevertheless, he was flattered, and he did believe that she loved him. As to his love for her,—he knew very well that it amounted to nothing. Now and again, perhaps twice a week, if he saw her as often, he would say something which would imply a declaration of affection. He felt that as much as that was expected from him, and that he ought not to hope to get off cheaper. And now that this little play was going on about Miss Van Siever, he did think that Mrs. Dobbs Broughton was doing her very best to overcome an unfortunate attachment. It is so gratifying to a young man's feelings to suppose that another man's wife has conceived an unfortunate attachment for him! Conway Dalrymple ought not to have been fooled by such a woman; but he was fooled by her.

As he returned home to-day from Mrs. Broughton's house to his own lodgings, he rambled out for a while into Kensington Gardens, and thought of his position seriously. "I don't see why I should not marry her," he said to himself, thinking of course of Miss Van Siever. "If Maria is not in earnest it is not my fault. And it would be my wish that she should be in earnest. If I suppose her to be so, and take her at her word, she can have no right to quarrel with me. Poor Maria! at any rate it will be better for her, for no good can come of this kind of thing. And, by heavens, with a woman like that, of strong feelings, one never knows what may happen." And then he thought of the condition he would be in, if he were to find her

some fine day in his own rooms, and if she were to tell him that she could not go home again, and that she meant to remain with him!

In the mean time Mrs. Dobbs Broughton had gone down into her own drawing-room, had tucked herself up on the sofa, and had fallen fast asleep.

CHAPTER X.

A NEW FLIRTATION.

JOHN EAMES sat at his office on the day after his return to London, and answered the various letters which he had found waiting for him at his lodgings on the previous evening. To Miss Demolines he had already written from his club,—a single line, which he considered to be appropriate to the mysterious necessities of the occasion. "I will be with you at a quarter to six to-morrow.—J. E. Just returned." There was not another word; and as he scrawled it at one of the club tables while two or three men were talking to him, he felt rather proud of his correspondence. "It was capital fun," he said; "and after all,"—the "all" on this occasion being Lily Dale, and the sadness of his disappointment at Allington,—"after all, let a fellow be ever so down in the mouth, a little amusement would do him good." And he reflected further that the more a fellow be "down in the mouth," the more good the amusement would do him. He sent off his note, therefore, with some little inward rejoicing,—and a word or two also of spoken rejoicing. "What fun women are sometimes," he said to one of his friends, —a friend with whom he was very intimate, calling him always Fred, and slapping his back, but whom he never by any chance saw out of his club.

"What 's up now, Johnny? Some good fortune?"

"Good fortune; no. I never have good fortunes of that kind. But I 've got hold of a young woman, —or rather a young woman has got hold of me, who insists on having a mystery with me. In the mystery itself there is not the slightest interest. But the mysteriousness of it is charming. I have just written to her three words to settle an appointment for to-morrow. We don't sign our names lest the Postmaster-General should find out all about it."

"Is she pretty?"

"Well;—she is n't ugly. She has just enough of good looks to make the sort of thing pass off pleasantly. A mystery with a downright ugly young woman would be unpleasant."

After this fashion the note from Miss Demolines had been received and answered at once, but the other letters remained in his pocket till he reached his office on the following morning. Sir Raffle had begged him to be there at half-past nine. This he had sworn he would not do; but he did seat himself in his room at ten minutes before ten, finding of course the whole building untenanted at that early hour,—that unearthly hour, as Johnny called it himself. "I should n't wonder if he really is here this morning," Johnny said, as he entered the building, "just that he may have an opportunity of jumping on me." But Sir Raffle was not there, and then Johnny began to abuse Sir Raffle. "If ever I come here early to meet him again, because he says he means to be here himself, I hope I may be ——blessed." On that especial morning it was twelve before Sir Raffle made his appearance, and Johnny avenged himself,—I regret to have to tell it,—by a fib.

That Sir Raffle fibbed first, was no valid excuse whatever for Eames.

"I 've been at it ever since six o'clock," said Sir Raffle.

"At what?" said Johnny.

"Work, to be sure;—and very hard work too. I believe the Chancellor of the Exchequer thinks that he can call upon me to any extent that he pleases;—just any extent that he pleases. He does n't give me credit for a desire to have a single hour to myself."

"What would he do, Sir Raffle, if you were to get ill, or wear yourself out?"

"He knows I 'm not one of the wearing-out sort. You got my note last night?"

"Yes; I got your note."

"I 'm sorry that I troubled you; but I could n't help it. I did n't expect to get a box full of papers at eleven o'clock last night."

"You did n't put me out, Sir Raffle; I happened to have business of my own which prevented the possibility of my being here early."

This was the way in which John Eames avenged himself. Sir Raffle turned his face upon his private secretary, and his face was very black. Johnny bore the gaze without dropping an eyelid. "I 'm not going to stand it, and he may as well know that at once," Johnny said to one of his friends in the office afterwards. "If he ever wants anything really done, I 'll do it;—though it should take me twelve hours at a stretch. But I 'm not going to pretend to believe all the lies he tells me about the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If that is to be part of the private secretary's business, he had better get somebody else." But now

Sir Raffle was very angry, and his countenance was full of wrath as he looked down upon his subordinate minister. "If I had come here, Mr. Eames, and had found you absent, I should have been very much annoyed,—very much annoyed indeed, after having written as I did."

"You would have found me absent at the hour you named. As I was n't here then, I think it 's only fair to say so."

"I 'm afraid you begrudge your time to the service, Mr. Eames."

"I do begrudge it when the service does n't want it."

"At your age, Mr. Eames, that 's not for you to judge. If I had acted in that way when I was young I should never have filled the position I now hold. I always remembered in those days that as I was the hand and not the head, I was bound to hold myself in readiness whether work might be required from me or not."

"If I 'm wanted as hand now, Sir Raffle, I 'm ready."

"That 's all very well;—but why were you not here at the hour I named?"

"Well, Sir Raffle, I cannot say that the Chancellor of the Exchequer detained me;—but there was business. As I 've been here for the last two hours, I am happy to think that in this instance the public service will not have suffered from my disobedience."

Sir Raffle was still standing with his hat on, and with his back to the fire, and his countenance was full of wrath. It was on his tongue to tell Johnny that he had better return to his former work in the outer office. He greatly wanted the comfort of a private secretary

who would believe in him, or at least pretend to believe in him. There are men who, though they have not sense enough to be true, have nevertheless sense enough to know that they cannot expect to be really believed in by those who are near enough to them to know them. Sir Raffle Buffle was such a one. He would have greatly delighted in the services of some one who would trust him implicitly,—of some young man who would really believe all that he said of himself and of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but he was wise enough to perceive that no such young man was to be had; or that any such young man,—could such a one be found,—would be absolutely useless for any purposes of work. He knew himself to be a liar whom nobody trusted. And he knew himself also to be a bully,—though he could not think so low of himself as to believe that he was a bully whom nobody feared. A private secretary was at the least bound to pretend to believe in him. There is a decency in such things, and that decency John Eames did not observe. He thought that he must get rid of John Eames, in spite of certain attractions which belonged to Johnny's appearance and general manners, and social standing, and reputed wealth. But it would not be wise to punish a man on the spot for breaking an appointment which he himself had not kept, and therefore he would wait for another opportunity. "You had better go to your own room now," he said. "I am engaged on a matter connected with the Treasury in which I will not ask for your assistance." He knew that Eames would not believe a word as to what he said about the Treasury,—not even some very trifling base of truth which did exist; but the boast gave him an opportunity

of putting an end to the interview after his own fashion. Then John Eames went to his own room and answered the letters which he had in his pocket.

To the club dinner he would not go. "What 's the use of paying two guineas for a dinner with fellows you see every day of your life?" he said. To Lady Glencora's he would go, and he wrote a line to his friend Dalrymple proposing that they should go together. And he would dine with his cousin Toogood in Tavistock Square. "One meets the queerest people in the world there," he said; "but Tommy Toogood is such a good fellow himself!" After that he had his lunch. Then he read the paper, and before he went away he wrote a dozen or two of private notes, presenting Sir Raffle's compliments right and left, and giving in no one note a single word of information that could be of any use to any person. Having thus earned his salary, by half-past four o'clock he got into a hansom cab and had himself driven to Porchester Terrace. Miss Demolines was at home, of course, and he soon found himself closeted with that interesting young woman.

"I thought you never would have come." These were the first words she spoke.

"My dear Miss Demolines, you must not forget that I have my bread to earn."

"Fiddlestick—bread! As if I did n't know that you can get away from your office when you choose."

"But, indeed, I cannot."

"What is there to prevent you, Mr. Eames?"

"I 'm not tied up like a dog, certainly; but who do you suppose will do my work if I do not do it myself? It is a fact, though the world does not believe it, that men in public offices have got something to do."

"Now you are laughing at me, I know; but you are welcome, if you like it. It 's the way of the world just at present that ladies should submit to that sort of thing from gentlemen."

"What sort of thing, Miss Demolines?"

"Chaff,—as you call it. Courtesy is out of fashion, and gallantry has come to signify quite a different kind of thing from what it used to do."

"The Sir Charles Grandison business is done and gone. That 's what you mean, I suppose? Don't you think we should find it very heavy if we tried to get it back again?"

"I 'm not going to ask you to be a Sir Charles Grandison, Mr. Eames. But never mind all that now. Do you know that that girl has absolutely had her first sitting for the picture?"

"Has she, indeed?"

"She has. You may take my word for it. I know it as a fact. What a fool that young man is!

"Which young man?"

"Which young man!" Conway Dalrymple, to be sure. Artists are always weak. Of all men in the world they are the most subject to flattery from women; and we all know that Conway Dalrymple is very vain."

"Upon my word I did n't know it," said Johnny.

"Yes, you do. You must know it. When a man goes about in a purple velvet coat of course he is vain."

"I certainly cannot defend a purple velvet coat."

"That is what he wore when this girl sat to him this morning."

"This morning was it?"

"Yes; this morning. They little think that they can do nothing without my knowing it. He was there for nearly four hours, and she was dressed up in a white robe as Jael, with a turban on her head. Jael, indeed! I call it very improper, and I am quite astonished that Maria Clutterbuck should have lent herself to such a piece of work. That Maria was never very wise, of course we all know; but I thought that she had principle enough to have kept her from this kind of thing."

"It 's her fevered existence," said Johnny.

"That is just it. She must have excitement. It is like dram-drinking. And then, you know, they are always living in the crater of a volcano."

"Who are living in the crater of a volcano?"

"The Dobbs Broughtons are. Of course they are. There is no saying what day a smash may come. These City people get so used to it that they enjoy it. The risk is everything to them."

"They like to have a little certainty behind the risk, I fancy."

"I 'm afraid there 's very little that 's certain with Dobbs Broughton. But about this picture, Mr. Eames. I look to you to assist me there. It must be put a stop to. As to that I am determined. It must be—put a—stop to." And as Miss Demolines repeated these last words with tremendous emphasis she leant with both her elbows on a little table that stood between her and her visitor, and looked with all her eyes into his face. "I do hope that you agree with me in that," said she.

"Upon my word, I do not see the harm of the picture," said he.

"You do not?"

"Indeed, no. Why should not Dalrymple paint Miss Van Siever as well as any other lady? It is his special business to paint ladies."

"Look here, Mr. Eames——" And now, Miss Demolines, as she spoke, drew her own seat closer to that of her companion and pushed away the little table. "Do you suppose that Conway Dalrymple, in the usual way of his business, paints pictures of young ladies, of which their mothers know nothing? Do you suppose that he paints them in ladies' rooms without their husbands' knowledge? And in the common way of his business does he not expect to be paid for his pictures?"

"But what is all that to you and me, Miss Demolines?"

"Is the welfare of your friend nothing to you? Would you like to see him become the victim of the artifice of such a girl as Clara Van Siever?"

"Upon my word I think he is very well able to take care of himself."

"And would you wish to see that poor creature's domestic hearth ruined and broken up?"

"Which poor creature?"

"Dobbs Broughton, to be sure."

"I can't pretend that I care very much for Dobbs Broughton," said John Eames; "and you see I know so little about his domestic hearth."

"Oh, Mr. Eames!"

"Besides, her principles will pull her through. You told me yourself that Mrs. Broughton has high principles."

"God forbid that I should say a word against Maria

Clutterbuck," said Miss Demolines, fervently. "Maria Clutterbuck was my early friend, and though words have been spoken which never should have been spoken, and though things have been done which never should have been even dreamed of, still I will not desert Maria Clutterbuck in her hour of need. No, never!"

"I 'm sure you 're what one may call a trump to your friends, Miss Demolines."

"I have always endeavoured to be so, and always shall. You will find me so; that is, if you and I ever become intimate enough to feel that sort of friendship."

"There is nothing on earth I should like better," said Johnny. As soon as the words were out of his mouth he felt ashamed of himself. He knew that he did not in truth desire the friendship of Miss Demolines, and that any friendship with such a one would mean something different from friendship,—something that would be an injury to Lily Dale. A week had hardly passed since he had sworn a life's constancy to Lily Dale,—had sworn it, not to her only, but to himself; and now he was giving way to a flirtation with this woman, not because he liked it himself, but because he was too weak to keep out of it."

"If that is true——," said Miss Demolines.

"Oh, yes; it 's quite true," said Johnny.

"Then you must earn my friendship by doing what I ask of you. That picture must not be painted. You must tell Conway Dalrymple as his friend that he must cease to carry on such an intrigue in another man's house."

"You would hardly call painting a picture an intrigue; would you?"

"Certainly I would when it 's kept a secret from the husband by the wife,—and from the mother by the daughter. If it cannot be stopped in any other way, I must tell Mrs. Van Siever;—I must, indeed. I have such an abhorrence of the old woman, that I could not bring myself to speak to her,—but I should write to her. That 's what I should do."

"But what 's the reason? You might as well tell me the real reason." Had Miss Demolines been christened Mary, or Fanny, or Jane, I think that John Eames would now have called her by either of those names; but Madalina was such a mouthful that he could not bring himself to use it at once. He had heard that among her intimates she was called Maddy. He had an idea that he had heard Dalrymple in old times talk of her as Maddy Mullins, and just at this moment the idea was not pleasant to him; at any rate he could not call her Maddy as yet. "How am I to help you," he said, "unless I know all about it?"

"I hate that girl like poison!" said Miss Demolines, confidentially, drawing herself very near to Johnny as she spoke.

"But what has she done?"

"What has she done? I can't tell you what she has done. I could not demean myself by repeating it. Of course we all know what she wants. She wants to catch Conway Dalrymple. That 's as plain as anything can be. Not that I care about that."

"Of course not," said Johnny.

"Not in the least. It 's nothing to me. I have known Mr. Dalrymple, no doubt, for a year or two, and I should be sorry to see a young man who has his good points sacrificed in that sort of way. But it is mere

acquaintance between Mr. Dalrymple and me, and of course I cannot interfere."

"She 'll have a lot of money, you know."

"He thinks so; does he? I suppose that is what Maria has told him. Oh, Mr. Eames, you don't know the meanness of women; you don't, indeed. Men are so much more noble."

"Are they, do you think?"

"Than some women. I see women doing things that really disgust me; I do, indeed;—things that I would n't do myself, were it ever so;—striving to catch men in every possible way, and for such purposes! I would n't have believed it of Maria Clutterbuck. I would n't, indeed. However, I will never say a word against her, because she has been my friend. Nothing shall ever induce me."

John Eames, before he left Porchester Terrace, had at last succeeded in calling his fair friend Madalina, and had promised that he would endeavour to open the artist's eyes to the folly of painting his picture in Broughton's house without Broughton's knowledge.

CHAPTER XI.

MR. TOOGOOD'S IDEAS ABOUT SOCIETY.

A DAY or two after the interview which was described in the last chapter John Eames dined with his uncle, Mr. Thomas Toogood, in Tavistock Square. He was in the habit of doing this about once a month, and was a great favourite both with his cousins and with their mother. Mr. Toogood did not give dinner parties; always begging those whom he asked to enjoy his hospitality, to take pot-luck, and telling young men whom he could treat with familiarity,—such as his nephew,—that if they wanted to be regaled à la Russe they must not come to number 75, Tavistock Square. "A leg of mutton and trimmings; that will be about the outside of it," he would say; but he would add in a whisper,—"and a glass of port such as you don't get every day of your life." Polly and Lucy Toogood were pretty girls, and merry withal, and certain young men were well contented to accept the attorney's invitations,—whether attracted by the promised leg of mutton, or the port wine, or the young ladies, I will not attempt to say. But it had so happened that one young man, a clerk from John Eames's office, had partaken so often of the pot-luck and port wine that Polly Toogood had conquered him by her charms, and he was now a slave, waiting an appropriate time for matrimonial sacrifice. William Summerkin was the

young man's name; and as it was known that Mr. Summerkin was to inherit a fortune amounting to five thousand pounds from his maiden aunt, it was considered that Polly Toogood was not doing amiss. "I 'll give you three hundred pounds, my boy, just to put a few sheets on the beds," said Toogood the father, "and when the old birds are both dead she 'll have a thousand pounds out of the nest. That 's the extent of Polly's fortune;—so now you know." Summerkin was, however, quite contented to have his own money settled on his darling Polly, and the whole thing was looked at with pleasant and propitious eyes by the Toogood connection.

When John Eames entered the drawing-room Summerkin and Polly were already there. Summerkin blushed up to his eyes, of course, but Polly sat as demurely as though she had been accustomed to having lovers all her life. "Mamma will be down almost immediately, John," said Polly as soon as the first greetings were over, "and papa has come in, I know."

"Summerkin," said Johnny, "I 'm afraid you left the office before four o'clock."

"No, I did not," said Summerkin. "I deny it."

"Polly," said her cousin, "you should keep him in better order. He will certainly come to grief if he goes on like this. I suppose you could do without him for half-an-hour?"

"I don't want him, I can assure you," said Polly.

"I have only been here just five minutes," said Summerkin, "and I came because Mrs. Toogood asked me to do a commission."

"That 's civil to you, Polly," said John.

"It 's quite as civil as I wish him to be," said Polly.

"And as for you, John, everybody knows that you 're a goose, and that you always were a goose. Is n't he always doing foolish things at the office, William?" But as John Eames was rather a great man at the Income-tax Office, Summerkin would not fall into his sweetheart's joke on this subject, finding it easier and perhaps safer to twiddle the bodkins in Polly's work-basket. Then Toogood and Mrs. Toogood entered the room together, and the lovers were able to be alone again during the general greeting with which Johnny was welcomed.

"You don't know the Silverbridge people,—do you?" asked Mr. Toogood. Eames said that he did not. He had been at Silverbridge more than once, but did not know very much of the Silverbridgians. "Because Walker is coming to dine here. Walker is the leading man in Silverbridge."

"And what is Walker;—besides being leading man in Silverbridge?"

"He 's a lawyer. Walker and Winthrop. Everybody knows Walker in Barsetshire. I 've been down at Barchester since I saw you."

"Have you indeed?" said Johnny.

"And I 'll tell you what I 've been about. You know Mr. Crawley; don't you?"

"The Hogglestock clergyman that has come to grief? I don't know him personally. He 's a sort of cousin by marriage, you know."

"Of course he is," said Mr. Toogood. "His wife is my first-cousin and your mother's first-cousin. He came here to me the other day;—or rather to the shop. I had never seen the man before in my life, and a very queer fellow he is too. He came to me about this

trouble of his, and of course I must do what I can for him. I got myself introduced to Walker, who has the management of the prosecution, and I asked him to come here and dine to-day."

"And what sort of fellow did you find Crawley, uncle Tom?"

"Such a queer fish;—so unlike anybody else in the world!"

"But I suppose he did take the money?" said Johnny.

"I don't know what to say about it. I don't indeed. If he took it he did n't mean to steal it. I 'm as sure that man did n't mean to steal twenty pounds as I ever could be of anything. Perhaps I shall get something about it out of Walker after dinner." Then Mr. Walker entered the room. "This is very kind of you, Mr. Walker; very, indeed. I take it quite as a compliment your coming in in this sort of way. It 's just pot-luck, you know, and nothing else." Mr. Walker of course assured his host that he was delighted. "Just a leg of mutton and a bottle of old port, Mr. Walker," continued Toogood. "We never get beyond that in the way of dinner-giving; do we, Maria?"

But Maria was at this moment descanting on the good luck of the family to her nephew,—and on one special piece of good luck which had just occurred. Mr. Summerkin's maiden aunt had declared her intention of giving up the fortune to the young people at once. She had enough to live upon, she said, and would therefore make two lovers happy. "And they 're to be married on the first of May," said Lucy, —that Lucy of whom her father had boasted to Mr. Crawley that she knew Byron by heart,— "and won't

that be jolly? Mamma is going out to look for a house for them to-morrow. Fancy Polly with a house of her own! Won't it be stunning? I wish you were going to be married too, Johnny."

"Don't be a fool, Lucy."

"Of course I know that you are in love. I hope you are not going to give over being in love, Johnny, because it is such fun."

"Wait till you 're caught yourself, my girl."

"I don't mean to be caught till some great swell comes this way. And as great swells never do come into Tavistock Square, I shan't have a chance. I 'll tell you what I would like; I 'd like to have a Corsair, —or else a Giaour;—I think a Giaour would be nicest. Only a Giaour would n't be a Giaour here, you know. Fancy a lover

> "'Who thundering comes on blackest steed,
> With slackened bit and hoof of speed.'

Were not those the days to live in! But all that is over now, you know, and young people take houses in Woburn Place, instead of being locked up, or drowned, or married to a hideous monster behind a veil. I suppose it 's better as it is, for some reasons."

"I think it must be more jolly, as you call it, Lucy."

"I 'm not quite sure. I know I 'd go back and be Medora, if I could. Mamma is always telling Polly that she must be careful about William's dinner. But Conrad did n't care for his dinner.

> "'Light toil! to cull and dress thy frugal fare!
> See, I have plucked the fruit that promised best.'"

"And how often do you think Conrad got drunk?"

"I don't think he got drunk at all. There is no

reason why he should, any more than William. Come along, and take me down to dinner. After all, papa's leg of mutton is better than Medora's apples, when one is as hungry as I am."

The leg of mutton on this occasion consisted of soup, fish, and a bit of roast beef, and a couple of boiled fowls. "If I had only two children instead of twelve, Mr. Walker," said the host, "I 'd give you a dinner à la Russe."

"I don't begrudge Mrs. Toogood a single arrow in her quiver on that score," said Mr. Walker.

"People are getting to be so luxurious that one can't live up to them at all," said Mrs. Toogood. "We dined out here with some new-comers in the Square only last week. We had asked them before, and they came quite in a quiet way,—just like this; and when we got there we found they 'd four kinds of ices after dinner!"

"And not a morsel of food on the table fit to eat," said Toogood. "I never was so poisoned in my life. As for soup,—it was just the washings of the pastrycook's kettle next door."

"And how is one to live with such people, Mr. Walker?" continued Mrs. Toogood. "Of course we can't ask them back again. We can't give them four kinds of ices."

"But would that be necessary? Perhaps they have n't got twelve children."

"They have n't got any," said Toogood, triumphing; "not a chick belonging to them. But you see one must do as other people do. I hate anything grand. I would n't want more than this for myself, if bank-notes were as plenty as curl-papers."

"Nobody has any curl-papers now, papa," said Lucy.

"But I can't bear to be outdone," said Mr. Toogood. "I think it 's very unpleasant,—people living in that sort of way. It 's all very well telling me that I need n't live so too;—and of course I don't. I can't afford to have four men in from the confectioner's, dressed a sight better than myself, at ten shillings a head. I can't afford it, and I don't do it. But the worst of it is that I suffer because other people do it. It stands to reason that I must either be driven along with the crowd, or else be left behind. Now, I don't like either. And what 's the end of it? Why, I 'm half carried away and half left behind."

"Upon my word, papa, I don't think you 're carried away at all," said Lucy.

"Yes, I am; and I 'm ashamed of myself. Mr. Walker, I don't dare to ask you to drink a glass of wine with me in my own house,—that 's what I don't,—because it 's the proper thing for you to wait till somebody brings it you, and then to drink it by yourself. There is no knowing whether I might n't offend you." And Mr. Toogood as he spoke grasped the decanter at his elbow. Mr. Walker grasped another at his elbow, and the two attorneys took their glass of wine together.

"A very queer case this is of my cousin Crawley's," said Toogood to Walker, when the ladies had left the dining-room.

"A most distressing case. I never knew anything so much talked of in our part of the country."

"He can't have been a popular man, I should say?"

"No; not popular,—not in the ordinary way;—

anything but that. Nobody knew him personally before this matter came up."

"But a good clergyman, probably? I 'm interested in the case, of course, as his wife is my first-cousin. You will understand, however, that I know nothing of him. My father tried to be civil to him once, but Crawley would n't have it at all. We all thought he was mad then. I suppose he has done his duty in his parish?"

"He has quarrelled with the bishop, you know,—out and out."

"Has he, indeed? But I 'm not sure that I think so very much about bishops, Mr. Walker."

"That depends very much on the particular bishop. Some people say ours is n't all that a bishop ought to be, while others are very fond of him."

"And Mr. Crawley belongs to the former set; that 's all?" said Mr. Toogood.

"No, Mr. Toogood; that is n't all. The worst of your cousin is that he has an aptitude to quarrel with everybody. He is one of those men who always think themselves to be ill-used. Now our dean, Dr. Arabin, has been his very old friend,—and as far as I can learn, a very good friend; but it seems that Mr. Crawley has done his best to quarrel with him, too."

"He spoke of the dean in the highest terms to me."

"He may do that,—and yet quarrel with him. He 'd quarrel with his own right hand, if he had nothing else to quarrel with. That makes the difficulty, you see. He 'll take nobody's advice. He thinks that we 're all against him."

"I suppose the world has been heavy on him, Mr. Walker?"

"The world has been very heavy on him," said John Eames, who had now been left free to join the conversation, Mr. Summerkin having gone away to his lady-love. "You must not judge him as you do other men."

"That is just it," said Mr. Walker. "And to what result will that bring us?"

"That we ought to stretch a point in his favour," said Toogood.

"But why?" asked the attorney from Silverbridge. "What do we mean when we say that one man is n't to be trusted as another? We simply imply that he is not what we call responsible."

"And I don't think Mr. Crawley is responsible," said Johnny.

"Then how can he be fit to have charge of a parish?" said Mr. Walker. "You see where the difficulty is;—how it embarrasses one all round! The amount of evidence as to the cheque is, I think, sufficient to get a verdict in an ordinary case, and the Crown has no alternative but so to treat it. Then his friends come forward,—and from sympathy with his sufferings, I desire to be ranked among the number,—and say, 'Ah, but you should spare this man, because he is not responsible.' Were he one who filled no position requiring special responsibility, that might be very well. His friends might undertake to look after him, and the prosecution might perhaps be smothered. But Mr. Crawley holds a living, and if he escape he will be triumphant,—especially triumphant over the bishop. Now, if he has really taken this money, and if his only excuse be that he did not know when he took it whether he was stealing or whether he was not,—for

the sake of justice that ought not to be allowed." So spoke Mr. Walker.

"You think he certainly did steal the money?" said Johnny.

"You have heard the evidence, no doubt?" said Mr. Walker.

"I don't feel quite sure about it yet," said Mr. Toogood.

"Quite sure of what?" said Mr. Walker.

"That the cheque was dropped in his house."

"It was at any rate traced to his hands."

"I have no doubt about that," said Toogood.

"And he can't account for it," said Walker.

"A man is n't bound to show where he got his money," said Johnny. "Suppose that sovereign is marked," and Johnny produced a coin from his pocket, "and I don't know but what it is; and suppose it is proved to have belonged to some one who lost it, and then to be traced to my hands,—how am I to say where I got it? If I were asked, I should simply decline to answer."

"But a cheque is not a sovereign, Mr. Eames," said Walker. "It is presumed that a man can account for the possession of a cheque. It may be that a man should have a cheque in his possession and not be able to account for it, and should yet be open to no grave suspicion. In such a case a jury has to judge. Here is the fact; that Mr. Crawley has the cheque, and brings it into use some considerable time after it is drawn; and the additional fact that the drawer of the cheque had lost it, as he thought, in Mr. Crawley's house, and had looked for it there, soon after it was drawn, and long before it was paid. A jury must

judge; but as a lawyer, I should say that the burden of disproof lies with Mr. Crawley."

"Did you find out anything, Mr. Walker," said Toogood, "about the man who drove Mr. Soames that day?"

"No,—nothing."

"The trap was from the Dragon at Barchester, I think?"

"Yes,—from the Dragon of Wantly."

"A respectable sort of house?"

"Pretty well for that, I believe. I 've heard that the people are poor," said Mr. Walker.

"Somebody told me that they 'd had a queer lot about the house, and that three or four of them left just then. I think I heard that two or three men from the place went to New Zealand together. It just came out in conversation while I was in the inn yard."

"I have never heard anything of it," said Mr. Walker.

"I don't say that it can help us."

"I don't see that it can," said Mr. Walker.

After that there was a pause, and Mr. Toogood pushed about the old port, and made some very stinging remarks as to the claret-drinking propensities of the age. "Gladstone claret the most of it is, I fancy," said Mr. Toogood. "I find that port wine which my father bought in the wood five-and-twenty years ago is good enough for me." Mr. Walker said that it was quite good enough for him, almost too good, and that he thought that he had had enough of it. The host threatened another bottle, and was up to draw the cork,—rather to the satisfaction of John Eames, who

liked his uncle's port,—but Mr. Walker stopped him. "Not a drop more for me," he said.

"You are quite sure?"

"Quite sure." And Mr. Walker moved towards the door.

"It 's a great pity, Mr. Walker," said Toogood, going back to the old subject, "that this dean and his wife should be away."

"I understand that they will both be home before the trial," said Mr. Walker.

"Yes,—but you know how very important it is to learn beforehand exactly what your witnesses can prove and what they can't prove. And moreover, though neither the dean nor his wife might perhaps be able to tell us anything themselves, they might help to put us on the proper scent. I think I 'll send somebody after them. I think I will."

"It would be a heavy expense, Mr. Toogood."

"Yes," said Toogood, mournfully, thinking of the twelve children; "it would be a heavy expense. But I never like to stick at a thing when it ought to be done. I think I shall send a fellow after them."

"I 'll go," said Johnny.

"How can you go?"

"I 'll make old Snuffle give me leave."

"But will that lessen the expense?" said Mr. Walker.

"Well, yes, I think it will," said John, modestly.

"My nephew is a rich man, Mr. Walker," said Toogood.

"That alters the case," said Mr. Walker. And thus, before they left the dining-room, it was settled that John Eames should be taught his lesson and should seek both Mrs. Arabin and Dr. Arabin on their travels.

CHAPTER XII.

GRACE CRAWLEY AT HOME.

On the morning after his return from London Mr. Crawley showed symptoms of great fatigue, and his wife implored him to remain in bed. But this he would not do. He would get up, and go out down to the brickfields. He had specially bound himself, he said, to see that the duties of the parish did not suffer by being left in his hands. The bishop had endeavoured to place them in other hands, but he had persisted in retaining them. As he had done so he could allow no weariness of his own to interfere,—and especially no weariness induced by labours undertaken on his own behalf. The day in the week had come round on which it was his wont to visit the brickmakers, and he would visit them. So he dragged himself out of his bed and went forth amidst the cold storm of a harsh wet March morning. His wife well knew when she heard his first word on that morning that one of those terrible moods had come upon him which made her doubt whether she ought to allow him to go anywhere alone. Latterly there had been some improvement in his mental health. Since the day of his encounter with the bishop and Mrs. Proudie, though he had been as stubborn as ever, he had been less apparently unhappy, less depressed in spirits. And the

journey to London had done him good. His wife had congratulated herself on finding him able to set about his work like another man, and he himself had experienced a renewal, if not of hope, at any rate, of courage, which had given him a comfort which he had recognised. His common sense had not been very striking in his interview with Mr. Toogood, but yet he had talked more rationally then and had given a better account of the matter in hand than could have been expected from him for some weeks previously. But now that the labour was over, a reaction had come upon him, and he went away from his house having hardly spoken a word to his wife after the speech which he made about his duty to his parish.

I think that at this time nobody saw clearly the working of his mind,—not even his wife, who studied it very closely, who gave him credit for all his high qualities, and who had gradually learned to acknowledge to herself that she must distrust his judgment in many things. She knew that he was good and yet weak, that he was afflicted by false pride and supported by true pride, that his intellect was still very bright, yet so dismally obscured on many sides as almost to justify people in saying that he was mad. She knew that he was almost a saint, and yet almost a castaway through vanity and hatred of those above him. But she did not know that he knew all this of himself also. She did not comprehend that he should be hourly telling himself that people were calling him mad and were so calling him with truth. It did not occur to her that he could see her insight into him. She doubted as to the way in which he had got the cheque,—never imagining, however, that he had wilfully stolen it;—thinking

that his mind had been so much astray as to admit of his finding it and using it without wilful guilt,—thinking also, alas! that a man who could so act was hardly fit for such duties as those which were entrusted to him. But she did not dream that this was precisely his own idea of his own state and of his own position;—that he was always inquiring of himself whether he was not mad; whether, if mad, he was not bound to lay down his office; that he was ever taxing himself with improper hostility to the bishop,—never forgetting for a moment his wrath against the bishop and the bishop's wife, still comforting himself with his triumph over the bishop and the bishop's wife,—but, for all that, accusing himself of a heavy sin and proposing to himself to go to the palace and there humbly to relinquish his clerical authority. Such a course of action he was proposing to himself, but not with any realised idea that he would so act. He was as a man who walks along a river's bank thinking of suicide, calculating how best he might kill himself,—whether the river does not offer an opportunity too good to be neglected, telling himself that for many reasons he had better do so, suggesting to himself that the water is pleasant and cool, and that his ears would soon be deaf to the harsh noises of the world,—but yet knowing, or thinking that he knows, that he will never kill himself. So it was with Mr. Crawley. Though his imagination pictured to himself the whole scene,—how he would humble himself to the ground as he acknowledged his unfitness, how he would endure the small-voiced triumph of the little bishop, how, from the abjectness of his own humility, even from the ground on which he would be crouching, he would rebuke the loud-mouthed triumph

of the bishop's wife; though there was no touch wanting to the picture which he thus drew,—he did not really propose to himself to commit this professional suicide. His wife, too, had considered whether it might be in truth becoming that he should give up his clerical duties, at any rate for a while; but she had never thought that the idea was present to his mind also.

Mr. Toogood had told him that people would say that he was mad; and Mr. Toogood had looked at him, when he declared for the second time that he had no knowledge whence the cheque had come to him, as though his words were to be regarded as the words of some sick child. "Mad!" he said to himself, as he walked home from the station that night. "Well; yes; and what if I am mad? When I think of all that I have endured my wonder is that I should not have been mad sooner." And then he prayed,—yes, prayed, that in his madness the Devil might not be too strong for him, and that he might be preserved from some terrible sin of murder or violence. What if the idea should come to him in his madness that it would be well for him to slay his wife and his children? Only that was wanting to make him of all men the most unfortunate.

He went down among the brickmakers on the following morning, leaving the house almost without a morsel of food, and he remained at Hoggle End for the greater part of the day. There were sick persons there with whom he prayed, and then he sat talking with rough men while they ate their dinners, and he read passages from the Bible to women while they washed their husbands' clothes. And for a while he sat with a little girl in his lap teaching the child her

alphabet. If it were possible for him he would do his duty. He would spare himself in nothing, though he might suffer even to fainting. And on this occasion he did suffer,—almost to fainting, for as he returned home in the afternoon he was forced to lean from time to time against the banks on the road-side, while the cold sweat of weakness trickled down his face, in order that he might recover strength to go on a few yards. But he would persevere. If God would but leave to him mind enough for his work, he would go on. No personal suffering should deter him. He told himself that there had been men in the world whose sufferings were sharper even than his own. Of what sort had been the life of the man who had stood for years on the top of the pillar? But then the man on the pillar had been honoured by all around him. And thus, though he had thought of the man on the pillar to encourage himself by remembering how lamentable had been that man's suffering, he came to reflect that after all his own sufferings were perhaps keener than those of the man on the pillar.

When he reached home, he was very ill. There was no doubt about it then. He staggered to his arm-chair, and stared at his wife first, then smiled at her with a ghastly smile. He trembled all over, and when food was brought to him he could not eat it. Early on the next morning the doctor was by his bedside, and before that evening came he was delirious. He had been at intervals in this state for nearly two days, when Mrs. Crawley wrote to Grace, and though she had restrained herself from telling everything, she had written with sufficient strength to bring Grace at once to her father's bedside.

He was not so ill when Grace arrived but that he knew her, and he seemed to receive some comfort from her coming. Before she had been in the house an hour she was reading Greek to him, and there was no wandering in his mind as to the due emphasis to be given to the plaints of the injured heroines, or as to the proper meaning of the choruses. And as he lay with his head half buried in the pillows, he shouted out long passages, lines from tragic plays by the score, and for a while seemed to have all the enjoyment of a dear old pleasure placed newly within his reach. But he tired of this after a while, and then, having looked round to see that his wife was not in the room, he began to talk of himself.

"So you have been to Allington, my dear?"

"Yes, papa."

"Is it a pretty place?"

"Yes, papa;—very pretty."

"And they were good to you?"

"Yes, papa;—very good."

"Had they heard anything there about—me; of this trial that is to come on?"

"Yes, papa; they had heard of it."

"And what did they say? You need not think that you will shock me by telling me. They cannot say worse there than people have said here,—or think worse."

"They don't think at all badly of you at Allington, papa."

"But they must think badly of me if the magistrates were right?"

"They suppose that there has been a mistake;—as we all think."

"They do not try men at the assizes for mistakes."

"That you have been mistaken, I mean;—and the magistrates mistaken."

"Both cannot have been mistaken, Grace."

"I don't know how to explain myself, papa; but we all know that it is very sad, and are quite sure that you have never meant for one moment to do anything that was wrong."

"But people when they are,—you know what I mean, Grace; when they are not themselves,—do things that are wrong without meaning it." Then he paused, while she remained standing by him with her hand on the back of his. She was looking at his face, which had been turned towards her while they were reading together, but which now was so far moved that she knew that his eyes could not be fixed upon hers. "Of course if the bishop orders it, it shall be so," he said. "It is quite enough for me that he is the bishop."

"What has the bishop ordered, papa?"

"Nothing at all. It is she who does it. He has given no opinion about it. Of course not. He has none to give. It is the woman. You go and tell her from me that in such a matter I will not obey the word of any woman living. Go at once, when I tell you." Then she knew that her father's mind was wandering, and she knelt down by the bedside, still holding his hand. "Grace," he said.

"Yes, papa, I am here."

"Why do you not do what I tell you?" And he sat upright in his bed. "I suppose you are afraid of the woman?"

"I should be afraid of her, dear papa."

"I was not afraid of her. When she spoke to me,

I would have nothing to say to her;—not a word; not a word;—not a word." As he said this he waved his hands about. "But as for him,—if it must be, it must. I know I 'm not fit for it. Of course I am not. Who is? But what has he ever done that he should be a dean? I beat him at everything; almost at everything. He got the Newdegate, and that was about all. Upon my word I think that was all."

"But Dr. Arabin loves you truly, dear papa."

"Love me! psha! Does he ever come here to tea, as he used to do? No! I remember buttering toast for him down on my knees before the fire, because he liked it,—and keeping all the cream for him. He should have had my heart's blood if he wanted it. But now;—look at his books, Grace. It 's the outside of them he cares about. They are all gilt, but I doubt if he ever reads. As for her,—I will not allow any woman to tell me my duty. No;—by my Maker; not even your mother, who is the best of women. And as for her, with her little husband dangling at her apron strings, as a call-whistle to be blown into when she pleases,—that she should dare to teach me my duty! No! The men in the jury-box may decide it how they will. If they can believe a plain story, let them! If not,—let them do as they please. I am ready to bear it all."

"Dear papa, you are tired. Will you not try to sleep?"

"Tell Mrs. Proudie what I say; and as for Arabin's money, I took it. I know I took it. What would you have had me do? Shall I—see them—all—starve?" Then he fell back upon his bed and did sleep.

The next day he was better, and insisted upon get-

ting out of bed, and on sitting in his old arm-chair over the fire. And the Greek books were again had out; and Grace, not at all unwillingly, was put through her facings. "If you don't take care, my dear," he said, "Jane will beat you yet. She understands the force of the verbs better than you do."

"I am very glad that she is doing so well, papa. I am sure I shall not begrudge her her superiority."

"Ah, but you should begrudge it her!" Jane was sitting by at the time, and the two sisters were holding each other by the hand. "Always to be best;—always to be in advance of others. That should be your motto."

"But we can't both be best, papa," said Jane.

"You can both strive to be best. But Grace has the better voice. I remember when I knew the whole of the Antigone by heart. You girls should see which can learn it first."

"It would take such a long time," said Jane.

"You are young, and what can you do better with your leisure hours? Fie, Jane! I did not expect that from you. When I was learning it I had eight or nine pupils, and read an hour a day with each of them. But I think that nobody works now as they used to work then. Where is your mamma? Tell her I think I could get out as far as Mrs. Cox's, if she would help me to dress." Soon after this he was in bed again, and his head was wandering; but still they knew that he was better than he had been.

"You are more of a comfort to your papa than I can be," said Mrs. Crawley to her eldest daughter that night as they sat together, when everybody else was in bed.

"Do not say that, mamma. Papa does not think so."

"I cannot read Greek plays to him as you can do. I can only nurse him in his illness and endeavour to do my duty. Do you know, Grace, that I am beginning to fear that he half doubts me?"

"Oh, mamma!"

"That he half doubts me, and is half afraid of me. He does not think as he used to do, that I am altogether, heart and soul, on his side. I can see it in his eye as he watches me. He thinks that I am tired of him,—tired of his sufferings, tired of his poverty, tired of the evil which men say of him. I am not sure but what he thinks that I suspect him."

"Of what, mamma?"

"Of general unfitness for the work he has to do. The feeling is not strong as yet, but I fear that he will teach himself to think that he has an enemy at his hearth,—not a friend. It will be the saddest mistake he ever made."

"He told me to-day that you were the best of women. Those were his very words."

"Were they, my dear? I am glad at least that he should say so to you. He has been better since you came;—a great deal better. For one day I was frightened; but I am sorry now that I sent for you."

"I am so glad, mamma; so very glad."

"You were happy there,—and comfortable. And if they were glad to have you, why should I have brought you away?"

"But I was not happy;—even though they were very good to me. How could I be happy there when I was thinking of you and papa and Jane here at home? Whatever there is here, I would sooner share

it with you than be anywhere else,—while this trouble lasts."

"My darling!—it is a great comfort to see you again."

"Only that I knew that one less in the house would be a saving to you I should not have gone. When there is unhappiness, people should stay together;—should n't they, mamma?" They were sitting quite close to each other, on an old sofa in a small upstairs room, from which a door opened into the larger chamber in which Mr. Crawley was lying. It had been arranged between them that on this night Mrs. Crawley should remain with her husband, and that Grace should go to her bed. It was now past one o'clock, but she was still there, clinging to her mother's side, with her mother's arm drawn round her. "Mamma," she said, when they had both been silent for some ten minutes, "I have got something to tell you."

"To-night?"

"Yes, mamma; to-night if you will let me."

"But you promised that you would go to bed. You were up all last night."

"I am not sleepy, mamma."

"Of course you shall tell me what you please, dearest. Is it a secret? Is it something that I am not to repeat?"

"You must say how that ought to be, mamma. I shall not tell it to any one else."

"Well, dear?"

"Sit comfortably, mamma;—there; like that, and let me have your hand. It 's a terrible story to have to tell."

"A terrible story, Grace?"

"I mean that you must not draw away from me. I shall want to feel that you are quite close to me. Mamma, while I was at Allington, Major Grantly came there."

"Did he, my dear?"

"Yes, mamma."

"Did he know them before?"

"No, mamma; not at the Small House. But he came there—to see me. He asked me—to be his wife. Don't move, mamma."

"My darling child! I won't move, dearest. Well; and what did you say to him? God bless him, at any rate. May God bless him, because he has seen with a true eye, and felt with a noble instinct. It is something, Grace, to have been wooed by such a man at such a time."

"Mamma, it did make me feel proud; it did."

"You have known him well before,—of course? I knew that you and he were friends, Grace."

"Yes, we were friends. I always liked him. I used not to know what to think about him. Miss Anne Prettyman told me that it would be so; and once before I thought so, myself."

"And had you made up your mind what to say to him?"

"Yes, I had then. But I did not say it."

"Did not say what you had made up your mind to say?"

"That was before all this had happened to papa."

"I understand you, dearest."

"When Miss Anne Prettyman told me that I should be ready with my answer, and when I saw that Miss Prettyman herself used to let him come to the house

and seemed to wish that I should see him when he came, and when he once was—so very gentle and kind, and when he said that he wanted me to love Edith—— Oh, mamma!"

"Yes, darling, I know. Of course you loved him."

"Yes, mamma. And I do love him. How could one not love him?"

"I love him,—for loving you."

"But, mamma, one is bound not to do a harm to any one that one loves. So when he came to Allington I told him that I could not be his wife."

"Did you, my dear?"

"Yes; I did. Was I not right? Ought I to go to him to bring a disgrace upon all the family, just because he is so good that he asks me? Shall I injure him because he wants to do me a service?"

"If he loves you, Grace, the service he will require will be your love in return."

"That is all very well, mamma,—in books; but I do not believe it in reality. Being in love is very nice, and in poetry they make it out to be everything. But I do not think I should make Major Grantly happy if when I became his wife his own father and mother would not see him. I know I should be so wretched, myself, that I could not live."

"But would it be so?"

"Yes;—I think it would. And the archdeacon is very rich, and can leave all his money away from Major Grantly if he pleases. Think what I should feel if I were the cause of Edith losing her fortune!"

"But why do you suppose these terrible things?"

"I have a reason for supposing them. This must be a secret. Miss Anne Prettyman wrote to me."

"I wish Miss Anne Prettyman's hand had been in the fire."

"No, mamma; no; she was right. Would not I have wished, do you think, to have learned all the truth about the matter before I answered him? Besides, it made no difference. I could have made no other answer while papa is under such a terrible ban. It is no time for us to think of being in love. We have got to love each other. Is n't it so, mamma?" The mother did not answer in words, but slipping down on her knees before her child threw her arms round her girl's body in a close embrace. "Dear mamma; dearest mamma; this is what I wanted;—that you should love me!"

"Love you, my angel!"

"And trust me;—and that we should understand each other, and stand close by each other. We can do so much to comfort one another;—but we cannot comfort other people."

"He must know that best himself, Grace;—but what did he say more to you?"

"I don't think he said anything more."

"He just left you, then?"

"He said one thing more."

"And what was that?"

"He said;—but he had no right to say it."

"What was it, dear?"

"That he knew I loved him, and that therefore—— But, mamma, do not think of that. I will never be his wife,—never, in opposition to his family."

"But he did not take your answer?"

"He must take it, mamma. He shall take it. If he can be stubborn, so can I. If he knows how to

think of me more than himself, I can think of him and Edith more than of myself. That is not quite all, mamma. Then he wrote to me. There is his letter."

Mrs. Crawley read the letter. "I suppose you answered it?"

"Yes, I answered it. It was very bad, my letter. I should think after that he will never want to have anything more to say to me. I tried for two days, but I could not write a nice letter."

"But what did you say?"

"I don't in the least remember. It does not in the least signify now, but it was such a bad letter."

"I dare say it was very nice."

"It was terribly stiff, and all about a gentleman."

"All about a gentleman! What do you mean, my dear?"

"Gentleman is such a frightful word to have to use to a gentleman; but I did not know what else to say. Mamma, if you please, we won't talk about it;—not about the letter, I mean. As for him, I 'll talk about him for ever, if you like it. I don't mean to be a bit broken-hearted."

"It seems to me that he is a gentleman."

"Yes, mamma, that he is; and it is that which makes me so proud. When I think of it, I can hardly hold myself. But now I 've told you everything, and I 'll go away, and go to bed."

CHAPTER XIII.

MR. TOOGOOD TRAVELS PROFESSIONALLY.

Mr. Toogood paid another visit to Barsetshire, in order that he might get a little further information which he thought would be necessary before despatching his nephew upon the traces of Dean Arabin and his wife. He went down to Barchester after his work was over, by an evening train, and put himself up at the Dragon of Wantly, intending to have the whole of the next day for his work. Mr. Walker had asked him to come and take a return pot-luck dinner with Mrs. Walker at Silverbridge; and this he had said that he would do. After having "rummaged about for tidings" in Barchester, as he called it, he would take the train to Silverbridge, and would get back to town in time for business on the third day.

"One day won't be much, you know," he said to his partner, as he made half an apology for absenting himself on business which was not to be in any degree remunerative.

"That sort of thing is very well when one does it without any expense," said Crump.

"So it is," said Toogood; "and the expense won't make it any worse." He had made up his mind, and it was not probable that anything Mr. Crump might say would deter him.

He saw John Eames before he started. "You 'll be ready this day week, will you?" John Eames promised that he would. "It will cost you some forty pounds, I should say. By George, if you have to go on to Jerusalem, it will cost you more." In answer to this, Johnny pleaded that it would be as good as any other tour to him. He would see the world. "I 'll tell you what," said Toogood; "I 'll pay half. Only you must n't tell Crump. And it will be quite as well not to tell Maria." But Johnny would hear nothing of this scheme. He would pay the entire cost of his own journey. He had lots of money, he said, and would like nothing better. "Then I 'll run down," said Toogood, "and rummage up what tidings I can. As for writing to the dean, what 's the good of writing to a man when you don't know where he is? Business letters always lie at hotels for two months, and then come back with double postage. From all I can hear, you 'll stumble on her before you find him. If we do nothing but bring him back, it will be a great thing to have the support of such a friend in the court. A Barchester jury won't like to find a man guilty who is hand-and-glove with the dean."

Mr. Toogood reached the Dragon about eleven o'clock, and allowed the boots to give him a pair of slippers and a candlestick. But he would not go to bed just at that moment. He would go into the coffee-room first, and have a glass of hot brandy-and-water. So the hot brandy-and-water was brought to him, and a cigar, and as he smoked and drank, he conversed with the waiter. The man was a waiter of the ancient class, a grey-haired waiter, with seedy clothes, and a dirty towel under his arm; not a dapper waiter,

with black shiny hair, and dressed like a guest for a dinner-party. There are two distinct classes of waiters, and as far as I have been able to perceive, the special status of the waiter in question cannot be decided by observation of the class of waiter to which he belongs. In such a town as Barchester you may find the old waiter with the dirty towel in the head inn, or in the second-class inn, and so you may the dapper waiter. Or you may find both in each, and not know which is senior waiter, and which junior waiter. But for service I always prefer the old waiter with the dirty towel, and I find it more easy to satisfy him in the matter of sixpences when my relations with the inn come to an end.

"Have you been here long, John?" said Mr. Toogood.

"A goodish many years, sir."

"So I thought, by the look of you. One can see that you belong in a way to the place. You do a good deal of business here, I suppose, at this time of the year?"

"Well, sir, pretty fair. The house ain't what it used to be, sir."

"Times are bad at Barchester,—are they?"

"I don't know much about the times. It 's the people is worse than the times, I think. They used to like to have a little bit of dinner now and again at a hotel!—and a drop of something to drink after it."

"And don't they like it now?"

"I think they like it well enough, but they don't do it. I suppose it 's their wives as don't let 'em come out and enjoy theirselves. There used to be the Goose and Glee club;—that was once a month. They 've gone and clean done away with themselves,—that club

has. There 's old Bumpter in the High Street,—he 's the last of the old Geese. They died off, you see, and when Mr. Biddle died they would n't choose another president. A club for having dinner, sir, ain't nothing without a president."

"I suppose not."

"And there 's the Freemasons. They must meet, you know, sir, in course, because of the dooties. But if you 'll believe me, sir, they don't so much as wet their whistles. They don't indeed. It always used to be a supper, and that was once a month. Now they pays a rent for the use of the room! Who is to get a living out of that, sir?—not in the way of a waiter, that is."

"If that 's the way things are going on I suppose the servants leave their places pretty often?"

"I don't know about that, sir. A man may do a deal worse than the Dragon of Wantly. Them as goes away to better themselves, often worses themselves, as I call it. I 've seen a good deal of that."

"And you stick to the old shop?"

"Yes, sir; I 've been here fifteen year, I think it is. There 's a many goes away, as does n't go out of their own heads, you know, sir."

"They get the sack, you mean?"

"There 's words between them and master,—or more likely, missus. That 's where it is. Servants is so foolish. I often tell 'em how wrong folks are to say that soft words butter no parsnips, and hard words break no bones."

"I think you 've lost some of the old hands here since this time last year, John?"

"You knows the house then, sir?"

"Well;—I 've been here before."

"There was four of them went, I think it 's just about twelve months back, sir."

"There was a man in the yard I used to know, and last time I was down here I found that he was gone."

"There was one of 'em out of the yard, and two out of the house. Master and them had got to very high words. There was poor Scuttle, who had been post-boy at the Compasses before he came here."

"He went away to New Zealand, did n't he?"

"B'leve he did, sir; or to some foreign parts. And Anne, as was under-chambermaid here: she went with him, fool as she was. They got theirselves married and went off, and he was well nigh as old as me. But seems he 'd saved a little money, and that goes a long way with any girl."

"Was he the man who drove Mr. Soames that day the cheque was lost?" Mr. Toogood asked this question perhaps a little too abruptly. At any rate he obtained no answer to it. The waiter said he knew nothing of Mr. Soames, or the cheque, and the lawyer suspecting that the waiter was suspecting him, finished his brandy-and-water and went to bed.

Early on the following morning he observed that he was specially regarded by a shabby-looking man, dressed in black, but in a black suit that was very old, with a red nose, whom he had seen in the hotel on the preceding day; and he learned that this man was a cousin of the landlord,—one Dan Stringer,—who acted as a clerk in the hotel bar. He took an opportunity also of saying a word to Mr. Stringer the landlord,—whom he found to be a somewhat forlorn and gouty individual, seated on cushions in a little parlour behind

the bar. After breakfast he went out, and having twice walked round the cathedral close and inspected the front of the palace and looked up at the windows of the prebendaries' houses, he knocked at the door of the deanery. The dean and Mrs. Arabin were on the Continent, he was told. Then he asked for Mr. Harding, having learned that Mr. Harding was Mrs. Arabin's father, and that he lived at the deanery. Mr. Harding was at home, but was not very well, the servant said. Mr. Toogood, however, persevered, sending up his card, and saying that he wished to have a few minutes' conversation with Mr. Harding on very particular business. He wrote a word upon his card before giving it to the servant,—"about Mr. Crawley." In a few minutes he was shown into the library, and had hardly time, while looking at the shelves, to remember what Mr. Crawley had said of his anger at the beautiful bindings, before an old man, very thin and very pale, shuffled into the room. He stooped a good deal, and his black clothes were very loose about his shrunken limbs. He was not decrepit, nor did he seem to be one who had advanced to extreme old age; but yet he shuffled rather than walked, hardly raising his feet from the ground. Mr. Toogood, as he came forward to meet him, thought that he had never seen a sweeter face. There was very much melancholy in it, of that soft sadness of age which seems to acknowledge, and in some sort to regret, the waning oil of life; but the regret to be read in such faces has in it nothing of the bitterness of grief; there is no repining that the end has come, but simply a touch of sorrow that so much that is dear must be left behind. Mr. Harding shook hands with his visitor, and invited him to sit down, and

then seated himself, folding his hands together over his knees, and he said a few words in a very low voice as to the absence of his daughter and of the dean.

"I hope you will excuse my troubling you," said Mr. Toogood.

"It is no trouble at all,—if I could be of any use. I don't know whether it is proper, but may I ask whether you call as—as—as a friend of Mr. Crawley's?"

"Altogether as a friend, Mr. Harding."

"I 'm glad of that; though of course I am well aware that the gentlemen engaged on the prosecution must do their duty. Still,—I don't know,—somehow I would rather not hear them speak of this poor gentleman before the trial."

"You know Mr. Crawley, then?"

"Very slightly,—very slightly indeed. He is a gentleman not much given to social habits, and has been but seldom here. But he is an old friend whom my son-in-law loves dearly."

"I 'm glad to hear you say that, Mr. Harding. Perhaps before I go any further I ought to tell you that Mrs. Crawley and I are first-cousins."

"Oh, indeed. Then you are a friend."

"I never saw him in my life till a few days ago. He is very queer, you know,—very queer indeed. I 'm a lawyer, Mr. Harding, practising in London;—an attorney that is." At each separate announcement Mr. Harding bowed, and when Toogood named his special branch of his profession Mr. Harding bowed lower than before, as though desirous of showing that he had great respect for attorneys. "And of course I 'm anxious, if only out of respect for the family, that

my wife's cousin should pull through this little difficulty, if possible."

"And for the sake of the poor man himself, too, and for his wife, and his children;—and for the sake of the cloth."

"Exactly; taking it altogether it 's such a pity, you know. I think, Mr. Harding, he can hardly have intended to steal the money."

"I 'm sure he did not."

"It 's very hard to be sure of anybody, Mr. Harding; —very hard."

"I feel quite sure that he did not. He has been a most pious, hard-working clergyman. I cannot bring myself to think that he is guilty. What does the Latin proverb say? 'No one of a sudden becomes most base.'"

"But the temptation, Mr. Harding, was very strong. He was awfully badgered about his debts. That butcher in Silverbridge was playing the mischief with him."

"All the butchers in Barsetshire could not make an honest man steal money, and I think that Mr. Crawley is an honest man. You 'll excuse me for being a little hot about one of my own order."

"Why; he is my cousin,—or rather, my wife's. But the fact is, Mr. Harding, we must get hold of the dean as soon as possible; and I 'm going to send a gentleman after him."

"To send a gentleman after him?" said Mr. Harding, almost in dismay.

"Yes; I think that will be best."

"I 'm afraid he 'll have to go a long way, Mr. Toogood."

"The dean, I 'm told, is in Jerusalem."

"I 'm afraid he is, or on his journey there. He 's to be there for the Easter week, and Sunday week will be Easter Sunday. But why should the gentleman want to go to Jerusalem after the dean?"

Then Mr. Toogood explained as well as he was able that the dean might have something to say on the subject which would serve Mr. Crawley's defence. "We should n't leave any stone unturned," said Mr. Toogood. "As far as I can judge, Crawley still thinks,—or half thinks,—that he got the cheque from your son-in-law." Mr. Harding shook his head sorrowfully. "I 'm not saying he did, you know," continued Mr. Toogood.

"I can't see myself how it is possible;—but still, we ought not to leave any stone unturned. And Mrs. Arabin,—can you tell me at all where we shall find her?"

"Has she anything to do with it, Mr. Toogood?"

"I can't quite say that she has, but it 's just possible. As I said before, Mr. Harding, we must n't leave a stone unturned. They 're not expected here till the end of April?"

"About the 25th or 26th, I think."

"And the assizes are the 28th. The judges come into the City on that day. It will be too late to wait till then. We must have our defence ready, you know. Can you say where my friend will find Mrs. Arabin?"

Mr. Harding began nursing his knee, patting it and being very tender to it, as he sat meditating with his head on one side,—meditating not so much as to the nature of his answer as to that of the question. Could it be necessary that any emissary from a lawyer's office

should be sent after his daughter? He did not like the idea of his Eleanor being disturbed by questions as to a theft. Though she had been twice married and had a son who was now nearly a man, still she was his Eleanor. But if it was necessary on Mr. Crawley's behalf, of course it must be done. "Her last address was at Paris, sir; but I think she has gone on to Florence. She has friends there, and she purposes to meet the dean at Venice on his return." Then Mr. Harding turned to the table and wrote on a card his daughter's address.

"I suppose Mrs. Arabin must have heard of the affair?" said Mr. Toogood.

"She had not done so when she last wrote. I mentioned it to her the other day, before I knew that she had left Paris. If my letters and her sister's letters have been sent on to her, she must know it now."

Then Mr. Toogood got up to take his leave. You will excuse me for troubling you, I hope, Mr. Harding."

"Oh, sir, pray do not mention that. It is no trouble, if one could only be of any service."

"One can always try to be of service. In these affairs so much is to be done by rummaging about, as I always call it. There have been many theatrical managers, you know, Mr. Harding, who have usually made up their pieces according to the dresses they have happened to have in their wardrobes."

"Have there, indeed, now? I never should have thought of that."

"And we lawyers have to do the same thing."

"Not with your clothes, Mr. Toogood?"

"Not exactly with our clothes;—but with our information."

"I do not quite understand you, Mr. Toogood."

"In preparing a defence we have to rummage about and get up what we can. If we can't find anything that suits us exactly, we are obliged to use what we do find as well as we can. I remember, when I was a young man, an ostler was to be tried for stealing some oats in the Borough; and he did steal them, too, and sold them at a rag-shop regularly. The evidence against him was as plain as a pike-staff. All I could find out was that on a certain day a horse had trod on the fellow's foot. So we put it to the jury whether the man could walk as far as the rag-shop with a bag of oats when he was dead-lame;—and we got him off."

"Did you though?" said Mr. Harding.

"Yes, we did."

"And he was guilty?"

"He had been at it regularly for months."

"Dear, dear, dear! Would n't it have been better to have had him punished for the fault,—gently; so as to warn him of the consequences of such doings?"

"Our business was to get him off,—and we got him off. It 's my business to get my cousin's husband off, if I can, and we must do it, by hook or crook. It 's a very difficult piece of work, because he won't let us employ a barrister. However, I shall have one in the court and say nothing to him about it at all. Good-bye, Mr. Harding. As you say, it would be a thousand pities that a clergyman should be convicted of a theft;—and one so well connected too."

Mr. Harding, when he was left alone, began to turn the matter over in his mind and to reflect whether the thousand pities of which Mr. Toogood had spoken appertained to the conviction of the criminal, or the doing

of the crime. "If he did steal the money I suppose he ought to be punished, let him be ever so much a clergyman," said Mr. Harding to himself. "But yet,—how terrible it would be! Of clergymen convicted of fraud in London he had often heard; but nothing of the kind had ever disgraced the diocese to which he belonged since he had known it. He could not teach himself to hope that Mr. Crawley should be acquitted if Mr. Crawley were guilty;—but he could teach himself to believe that Mr. Crawley was innocent. Something of a doubt had crept across his mind as he talked to the lawyer. Mr. Toogood, though Mrs. Crawley was his cousin, seemed to believe that the money had been stolen; and Mr. Toogood as a lawyer ought to understand such matters better than an old secluded clergyman in Barchester. But, nevertheless, Mr. Toogood might be wrong; and Mr. Harding succeeded in satisfying himself at last that he could not be doing harm in thinking that Mr. Toogood was wrong. When he had made up his mind on this matter he sat down and wrote the following letter, which he addressed to his daughter at the post-office in Florence:—

"Deanery, March, 186—.

"Dearest Nelly,—When I wrote on Tuesday I told you about poor Mr. Crawley, that he was the clergyman in Barsetshire of whose misfortune you read an account in Galignani's Messenger,—and I think Susan must have written about it also, because everybody here is talking of nothing else, and because, of course, we know how strong a regard the dean has for Mr. Crawley. But since that something has occurred which makes me write to you again,—at once. A gentleman

has just been here, and has indeed only this moment left me, who tells me that he is an attorney in London, and that he is nearly related to Mrs. Crawley. He seems to be a very good-natured man, and I dare say he understands his business as a lawyer. His name is Toogood, and he has come down as he says to get evidence to help the poor gentleman on his trial. I cannot understand how this should be necessary, because it seems to me that the evidence should all be wanted on the other side. I cannot for a moment suppose that a clergyman and a gentleman such as Mr. Crawley should have stolen money, and if he is innocent I cannot understand why all this trouble should be necessary to prevent a jury finding him guilty.

"Mr. Toogood came here because he wanted to see the dean,—and you also. He did not explain, as far as I can remember, why he wanted to see you; but he said it would be necessary, and that he was going to send off a messenger to find you first, and the dean afterwards. It has something to do with the money which was given to Mr. Crawley last year, and which, if I remember right, was your present. But of course Mr. Toogood could not have known anything about that. However, I gave him the address,—poste restante, Florence,—and I dare say that somebody will make you out before long, if you are still stopping at Florence. I did not like letting him go without telling you about it, as I thought that a lawyer's coming to you would startle you.

"The bairns are quite well, as I told you in my other letter, and Miss Jones says that little Elly is as good as gold. They are with me every morning and evening, and behave like darling angels, as they are.

Posy is my own little jewel always. You may be quite sure I do nothing to spoil them.

"God bless you, dearest Nelly,

"Your most affectionate father,

"SEPTIMUS HARDING."

After this he wrote another letter to his other daughter, Mrs. Grantly, telling her also of Mr. Toogood's visit; and then he spent the remainder of the day thinking over the gravity of the occurrence. How terrible would it be if a beneficed clergyman in the diocese should really be found guilty of theft by a jury from the City! And then he had always heard so high a character of this man from his son-in-law. No,—it was impossible to believe that Mr. Crawley had in truth stolen a cheque for twenty pounds!

Mr. Toogood could get no other information in Barchester, and went on to Silverbridge early in the afternoon. He was half disposed to go by Hogglestock and look up his cousin, whom he had never seen, and his cousin's husband, upon whose business he was now intent; but on reflection he feared that he might do more harm than good. He had quite appreciated the fact that Mr. Crawley was not like other men. "The man 's not above half-saved," he had said to his wife, —meaning thereby to insinuate that the poor clergyman was not in full possession of his wits. And, to tell the truth of Mr. Toogood, he was a little afraid of his relative. There was a something in Mr. Crawley's manner, in spite of his declared poverty, and in spite also of his extreme humility, which seemed to announce that he expected to be obeyed when he spoke on any point with authority. Mr. Toogood had not

forgotten the tone in which Mr. Crawley had said to him, "Sir, this thing you cannot do." And he thought that, upon the whole, he had better not go to Hogglestock on this occasion.

When at Silverbridge, he began at once to "rummage about." His chief rummaging was to be done at Mr. Walker's table; but before dinner he had time to call upon the magistrates' clerk, and ask a few questions as to the proceedings at the sitting from which Mr. Crawley was committed. He found a very taciturn old man, who was nearly as difficult to deal with in any rummaging process as a porcupine. But, nevertheless, at last he reached a state of conversation which was not absolutely hostile. Mr. Toogood pleaded that he was the poor man's cousin,—pleaded that, as the family lawyer, he was naturally the poor man's protector at such a time as the present,—pleaded also that as the poor man was so very poor, no one else could come forward on his behalf,—and in this way somewhat softened the hard sharpness of the old porcupine's quills. But after all this, there was very little to be learned from the old porcupine. "There was not a magistrate on the bench," he said, "who had any doubt that the evidence was sufficient to justify them in sending the case to the assizes. They had all regretted,"—the porcupine said in his softest moment,—"that the gentleman had come there without a legal adviser." "Ah, that 's been the mischief of it all!" said Mr. Toogood, dashing his hand against the porcupine's mahogany table. "But the facts were so strong, Mr. Toogood!" "Nobody there to soften 'em down, you know," said Mr. Toogood, shaking his head. Very little more than this was learned from the porcupine;

and then Mr. Toogood went away, and prepared for Mr. Walker's dinner.

Mr. Walker had invited Dr. Tempest and Miss Anne Prettyman and Major Grantly to meet Mr. Toogood, and had explained, in a manner intended to be half earnest and half jocose, that though Mr. Toogood was an attorney, like himself, and was at this moment engaged in a noble way on behalf of his cousin's husband, without any idea of receiving back even the money which he would be out of pocket; still he was n't quite, —not quite, you know—"not quite so much of a gentleman as I am,"—Mr. Walker would have said, had he spoken out freely that which he insinuated. But he contented himself with the emphasis he put upon the "not quite," which expressed his meaning fully. And Mr. Walker was correct in his opinion of Mr. Toogood. As regards the two attorneys I will not venture to say that either of them was not a "perfect gentleman." A perfect gentleman is a thing which I cannot define. But undoubtedly Mr. Walker was a bigger man in his way than was Mr. Toogood in his, and did habitually consort in the county of Barsetshire with men of higher standing than those with whom Mr. Toogood associated in London.

It seemed to be understood that Mr. Crawley was to be the general subject of conversation, and no one attempted to talk about anything else. Indeed, at this time, very little else was talked about in that part of the county;—not only because of the interest naturally attaching to the question of the suspected guilt of a parish clergyman, but because much had become lately known of Mr. Crawley's character, and because it was known also that an internecine feud had arisen between

him and the bishop. It had undoubtedly become the general opinion that Mr. Crawley had picked up and used a cheque which was not his own;—that he had, in fact, stolen it; but there was, in spite of that belief, a general wish that he might be acquitted and left in his living. And when the tidings of Mr. Crawley's victory over the bishop at the palace had become bruited about, popular sympathy went with the victor. The theft was, as it were, condoned, and people made excuses which were not always rational, but which were founded on the instincts of true humanity. And now the tidings of another stage in the battle, as fought against Mr. Crawley by the bishop, had gone forth through the county, and men had heard that the rural dean was to be instructed to make inquiries which should be preliminary to proceedings against Mr. Crawley in an ecclesiastical court. Dr. Tempest, who was now about to meet Mr. Toogood at Mr. Walker's, was the rural dean to whom Mr. Crawley would have to submit himself in any such inquiry; but Dr. Tempest had not as yet received from the bishop any official order on the subject.

"We are so delighted to think that you have taken up your cousin's case," said Mrs. Walker to Mr. Toogood, almost in a whisper.

"He is not just my cousin, himself," said Mr. Toogood, "but of course it 's all the same thing. And as to taking up his case, you see, my dear madam, he won't let me take it up."

"I thought you had. I thought you were down here about it?"

"Only on the sly, Mrs. Walker. He has such queer ideas that he will not allow a lawyer to be properly

employed; and you can't conceive how hard that makes it. Do you know him, Mrs. Walker?"

"We know his daughter Grace." And then Mrs. Walker whispered something further, which we may presume to have been an intimation that the gentleman opposite,—Major Grantly,—was supposed by some people to be very fond of Miss Grace Crawley.

"Quite a child, is n't she?" said Toogood, whose own daughter now about to be married was three or four years older than Grace.

"She is beyond being a child, I think. Of course she is young."

"But I suppose this affair will knock all that on the head," said the lawyer.

"I do not know how that may be; but they do say he is very much attached to her. The major is a man of family, and of course it would be very disagreeable if Mr. Crawley were found guilty."

"Very disagreeable, indeed; but, upon my word, Mrs. Walker, I don't know what to say about it."

"You think it will go against him, Mr. Toogood?" Mr. Toogood shook his head, and, on seeing this, Mrs. Walker sighed deeply.

"I can only say that I have heard nothing from the bishop as yet," said Dr. Tempest, after the ladies had left the room. "Of course, if he thinks well to order it, the inquiry must be made."

"But how long would it take?" asked Mr. Walker.

"Three months, I should think,—or perhaps more. Of course Crawley would do all that he could to delay us, and I am not at all sure that we should be in any very great hurry ourselves."

"Who are the 'we,' doctor?" said Mr. Walker.

"I cannot make such an inquiry by myself, you know. I suppose the bishop would ask me to select two or four other clergymen to act with me. That 's the usual way of doing it. But you may be quite sure of this, Walker; the assizes will be over, and the jury have found their verdict long before we have settled our preliminaries."

"And what will be the good of your going on after that?"

"Only this good:—if the unfortunate man be convicted——"

"Which he won't," said Mr. Toogood, who thought it expedient to put on a bolder front in talking of the matter to the rural dean, than he had assumed in his whispered conversation with Mrs. Walker.

"I hope not; with all my heart," said the doctor. "But, perhaps, for the sake of the argument, the supposition may be allowed to pass."

"Certainly, sir," said Mr. Toogood. "For the sake of the argument, it may pass."

"If he be convicted, then, I suppose, there will be an end of the question. He would be sentenced for not less, I should say, than twelve months; and after that——"

"And would be as good a parson of Hogglestock when he came out of prison as when he went in," said Mr. Walker. "The conviction and judgment in a civil court could not touch his temporality."

"Certainly not," said Mr. Toogood.

"Of course not," said the doctor. "We all know that; and in the event of Mr. Crawley coming back to his parish it would be open to the bishop to raise the question as to his fitness for the duties."

"Why should n't he be as fit as any one else?" said Mr. Toogood.

"Simply because he would have been found to be a thief," said the doctor. "You must excuse me, Mr. Toogood, but it 's only for the sake of the argument."

"I don't see what that has to do with it," said Mr. Toogood. "He would have undergone his penalty."

"It is preferable that a man who preaches from a pulpit should not have undergone such a penalty," said the doctor. "But in practice, under such circumstances,—which we none of us anticipate, Mr. Toogood,—the living should no doubt be vacated. Mr. Crawley would probably hardly wish to come back. The jury will do their work before we can do ours,—will do it on a much better base than any we can have; and, when they have done it, the thing ought to be finished. If the jury acquit him, the bishop cannot proceed any further. If he be found guilty I think that the resignation of the living must follow."

"It is all spite, then, on the bishop's part?" said the major.

"Not at all," said the doctor. "The poor man is weak; that is all. He is driven to persecute because he cannot escape persecution himself. But it may really be a question whether his present proceeding is not right. If I were bishop I should wait till the trial was over; that is all."

From this and from much more that was said during the evening on the same subject Mr. Toogood gradually learned the position which Mr. Crawley and the question of Mr. Crawley's guilt really held in the county, and he returned to town resolved to go on with the case.

"I 'll have a barrister down express, and I 'll defend him in his own teeth," he said to his wife. "There 'll be a scene in court, I dare say, and the man will call upon his own counsel to hold his tongue and shut up his brief; and, as far as I can see, counsel in such a case would have no alternative. But there would come an explanation,—how Crawley was too honourable to employ a man whom he could not pay, and there would be a romance, and it would all go down with the jury. One wants sympathy in such a case as that;—not evidence."

"And how much will it cost, Tom?" said Maria, dolefully.

"Only a trifle. We won't think of that yet. There 's John Eames is going all the way to Jerusalem, out of his pocket."

"But Johnny has n't got twelve children, Tom."

"One does n't have a cousin in trouble every day," said Toogood. "And then you see there 's something very pretty in the case. It 's quite a pleasure getting it up."

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. CROSBIE GOES INTO THE CITY.

I've known the City now for more than ten years, Mr. Crosbie, and I never knew money to be so tight as it is at this moment. The best commercial bills going can't be done under nine, and any other kind of paper can't so much as get itself looked at." Thus spoke Mr. Musselboro. He was seated in Dobbs Broughton's arm-chair in Dobbs Broughton's room in Hook Court, on the hind legs of which he was balancing himself comfortably; and he was communicating his experience in City matters to our old friend, Adolphus Crosbie,—of whom we may surmise that he would not have been there, at that moment, in Hook Court, if things had been going well with him. It was now past eleven o'clock, and he should have been at his office at the West End. His position in his office was no doubt high enough to place him beyond the reach of any special inquiry as to such absences; but it is generally felt that when the Crosbies of the West End have calls into the City about noon, things in the world are not going well with them. The man who goes into the City to look for money is generally one who does not know where to get money when he wants it. Mr. Musselboro on this occasion kept his hat on his head, and there was something in the way in which he bal-

anced his chair which was in itself an offence to Mr. Crosbie's personal dignity. It was hardly as yet two months since Mr. Dobbs Broughton had assured him in that very room that there need not be the slightest anxiety about his bill. Of course it could be renewed, —the commission being duly paid. As Mr. Dobbs Broughton explained on that occasion, that was his business. There was nothing he liked so much as renewing bills for such customers as Mr. Crosbie; and he was very candid at that meeting, explaining how he did this branch of his business, raising money on his own credit at four or five per cent., and lending it on his own judgment at eight or nine. Mr. Crosbie did not feel himself then called upon to exclaim that what he was called upon to pay was about twelve, perfectly understanding the comfort and grace of euphony; but he had turned it over in his mind, considering whether twelve per cent. was not more than he ought to be mulcted for the accommodation he wanted. Now, at the moment, he would have been glad to get it from Mr. Musselboro, without further words, for twenty.

Things had much changed with Adolphus Crosbie when he was driven to make morning visits to such a one as Mr. Musselboro with the view of having a bill renewed for two hundred and fifty pounds. In his early life he had always had the merit of being a care ful man as to money. In some other respects he had gone astray very foolishly,—as has been partly explained in our earlier chapters; but up to the date of his marriage with Lady Alexandrina De Courcy he had never had dealings in Hook Court or in any such locality. Money troubles had then come upon him. Lady Alexandrina, being the daughter of a countess,

had high ideas; and when, very shortly after his marriage, he had submitted to a separation from his noble wife, he had found himself and his income to be tied up inextricably in the hands of one Mr. Mortimer Gagebee, a lawyer who had married one of his wife's sisters. It was not that Mr. Gagebee was dishonest; nor did Crosbie suspect him of dishonesty; but the lawyer was so wedded to the interest of the noble family with which he was connected, that he worked for them all as an inferior spider might be supposed to work, which, from the infirmity of its nature, was compelled by its instincts to be catching flies always for superior spiders. Mr. Mortimer Gagebee had in his way entangled Mr. Crosbie in his web on behalf of those noble spiders, the De Courcys, and our poor friend, in his endeavour to fight his way through the web, had fallen into the hands of the Hook Court firm of Mrs. Van Siever, Dobbs Broughton, and Musselboro.

"Mr. Broughton told me when I was last here," said Crosbie, "that there would be no difficulty about it."

"And it was renewed then, was n't it?"

"Of course it was,—for two months. But he was speaking of a continuation of renewal."

"I 'm afraid we can't do it, Mr. Crosbie. I 'm afraid we can't, indeed. Money is so awful tight."

"Of course I must pay what you choose to charge me."

"It is n't that, Mr. Crosbie. The bill is out for collection, and must be collected. In times like these we must draw ourselves in a little, you know. Two hundred and fifty pounds is n't a great deal of money, you will say; but every little helps, you know; and, besides, of course we go upon a system. Business is

business, and must not be made pleasure of. I should have had a great deal of pleasure in doing this for you, but it can't be done in the way of business."

"When will Broughton be here?"

"He may be in at any time;—I can't say when. I suppose he 's down at the court now."

"What court?"

"Capel Court."

"I suppose I can see him there?" said Crosbie.

"If you catch him you can see him, of course. But what good will that do you, Mr. Crosbie? I tell you that we can't do it for you. If Broughton was here this moment it could n't make the slightest difference."

Now Mr. Crosbie had an idea that Mr. Musselboro, though he sat in Dobbs Broughton's seat and kept on his hat, and balanced his chair on two legs, was in truth nothing more than a clerk. He did not quite understand the manner in which the affairs of the establishment were worked, though he had been informed that Mrs. Van Siever was one of the partners. That Dobbs Broughton was the managing man, who really did the business, he was convinced; and he did not therefore like to be answered peremptorily by such a one as Musselboro. "I should wish to see Mr. Broughton," he said.

"You can call again,—or you can go down to the court if you like it. But you may take this as an answer from me, that the bill can't be renewed by us." At this moment the door of the room was opened, and Dobbs Broughton himself came into it. His face was not at all pleasant, and any one might have seen with half an eye that the money-market was a great deal tighter than he liked it to be.

"Here is Mr. Crosbie here,—about that bill," said Musselboro.

"Mr. Crosbie must take up his bill; that 's all," said Dobbs Broughton.

"But it does n't suit me to take it up," said Crosbie.

"Then you must take it up without suiting you," said Dobbs Broughton.

It might have been seen, I said, with half an eye, that Mr. Broughton did not like the state of the money-market; and it might also be seen with the other half that he had been endeavouring to mitigate the bitterness of his dislike by alcoholic aid. Musselboro at once perceived that his patron and partner was half drunk, and Crosbie was aware that he had been drinking. But, nevertheless, it was necessary that something more should be said. The bill would be due to-morrow,—was payable at Crosbie's bankers'; and, as Mr. Crosbie too well knew, there were no funds there for the purpose. And there were other purposes, very needful, for which Mr. Crosbie's funds were at the present moment unfortunately by no means sufficient. He stood for a few moments thinking what he would do;—whether he would leave the drunken man and his office and let the bill take its chance, or whether he would make one more effort for an arrangement. He did not for a moment believe that Broughton himself was subject to any pecuniary difficulty. Broughton lived in a big house, as rich men live, and had a name for commercial success. It never occurred to Crosbie that it was a matter of great moment to Dobbs Broughton himself that the bill should be taken up. Crosbie still thought that Musselboro was his special enemy, and that Broughton had joined Musselboro in his

hostility simply because he was too drunk to know better.

"You might, at any rate, answer me civilly, Mr. Broughton," he said.

"I know nothing about civility with things as they are at present," said Broughton. "Civil, by ——! There 's nothing so civil as paying money when you owe it. Musselboro, reach me down the decanter and some glasses. Perhaps Mr. Crosbie will wet his whistle."

"He don't want any wine,—nor you either," said Musselboro.

"What 's up now?" said Broughton, staggering across the room towards a cupboard, in which it was his custom to keep a provision of that comfort which he needed at the present moment. "I suppose I may stand a glass of wine to a fellow in my own room, if I like it."

"I will take no wine, thank you," said Crosbie.

"Then you can do the other thing. When I ask a gentleman to take a glass of wine there is no compulsion. But about the bill there is compulsion. Do you understand that? You may drink, or let it alone; but pay you must. Why, Mussy, what d'ye think?—There 's Carter, Ricketts and Carter;—I 'm blessed if Carter just now did n't beg for two months, as though two months would be all the world to him, and that for a trumpery five hundred pounds. I never saw money like it is now; never." To this appeal, Musselboro made no reply, not caring, perhaps, at the present moment, to sustain his partner. He still balanced himself in his chair, and still kept his hat on his head. Even Mr. Crosbie began to perceive that Mr. Musselboro's genius was in the ascendant in Hook Court.

"I can hardly believe," said Crosbie, "that things can be so bad that I cannot have a bill for two hundred and fifty pounds renewed when I am willing to pay for the accommodation. I have not done much in the way of bills, but I never had one dishonoured yet."

"Don't let this be the first," said Dobbs Broughton.

"Not if I can prevent it," said Crosbie. "But to tell you the truth, Mr. Broughton, my bill will be dishonoured unless I can have it renewed. If it does not suit you to do it, I suppose you can recommend me to some one who can make it convenient."

"Why don't you go to your bankers?" said Musselboro.

"I never did ask my bankers for anything of the kind."

"Then you should try what your credit with them is worth," said Broughton. "It is n't worth much here, as you can perceive. Ha, ha, ha!"

Crosbie, when he heard this, became very angry; and Musselboro, perceiving this, got out of his chair, so that he might be in readiness to prevent any violence, if violence were attempted. "It really is no good you 're staying here," he said. "You see that Broughton has been drinking. There 's no knowing what he may say or do."

"You be blowed," said Broughton, who had taken the arm-chair as soon as Musselboro had left it.

"But you may believe me in the way of business," continued Musselboro, "when I tell you that it really does not suit us to renew the bill. We 're pressed ourselves, and we must press others."

"And who will do it for me?" said Crosbie, almost in despair.

"There are Burton and Bangles there, the wine-merchants down in the yard; perhaps they may accommodate you. It 's all in their line; but I 'm told they charge uncommon dear."

"I don't know Messrs. Burton and Bangles," said Crosbie.

"That need n't stand in your way. You tell them where you come from, and they 'll make inquiry. If they think it 's about right, they 'll give you the money; and if they don't, they won't."

Mr. Crosbie then left the office without exchanging another word with Dobbs Broughton, and went down into Hook Court. As he descended the stairs he turned over in his mind the propriety of going to Messrs. Burton and Bangles with the view of relieving himself from his present difficulty. He knew that it was ruinous. Dealings even with such men as Dobbs Broughton and Musselboro, whom he presumed to be milder in their greed than Burton and Bangles, were, all of them, steps on the road to ruin. But what was he to do? If his bill were dishonoured, the fact would certainly become known at his office, and he might even ultimately be arrested. In the door-way at the bottom of the stairs he stood for some moments, looking over at Burton and Bangles', and he did not at all like the aspect of the establishment. Inside the office he could see a man standing with a cigar in his mouth, very resplendent with a new hat,—with a hat remarkable for the bold upward curve of its rim, and this man was copiously decorated with a chain and seals hanging about widely over his waistcoat. He was leaning with his back against the counter, and was talking to some one on the other side of it. There was

something in the man's look and manner that was utterly repulsive to Crosbie. He was more vulgar to the eye even than Musselboro, and his voice, which Crosbie could hear as he stood in the other door-way, was almost as detestable as that of Dobbs Broughton in his drunkenness. Crosbie did not doubt that this was either Burton or Bangles, and that the man standing inside was either Bangles or Burton. He could not bring himself to accost these men and tell them of his necessities, and propose to them that they should relieve him. In spite of what Musselboro had just said to him, he could not believe it possible that he should succeed, were he to do so without some introduction. So he left Hook Court and went out into the lane, hearing as he went the loud voice of the man with the turned-up hat and the chain.

But what was he to do? At the outset of his pecuniary troubles, when he first found it necessary to litigate some question with the De Courcy people, and withstand the web which Mortimer Gagebee wove so assiduously, his own attorney had introduced him to Dobbs Broughton, and the assistance which he had needed had come to him, at any rate, without trouble. He did not especially like Mr. Broughton; and when Mr. Broughton first invited him to come and eat a little bit of dinner, he had told himself with painful remorse that in his early days he had been accustomed to eat his little bits of dinner with people of a different kind. But there had been nothing really painful in this. Since his marriage with a daughter of the De Courcys, —by which marriage he had intended to climb to the highest pinnacle of social eating and drinking,—he had gradually found himself to be falling in the scale of

such matters, and could bring himself to dine with a Dobbs Broughton without any violent pain. But now he had fallen so low that Dobbs Broughton had insulted him, and he was in such distress that he did not know where to turn for ten pounds. Mr. Gagebee had beaten him at litigation, and his own lawyer had advised him that it would be foolish to try the matter further. In his marriage with the noble daughter of the De Courcys he had allowed the framers of the De Courcy settlement to tie him up in such a way that now, even when chance had done so much for him in freeing him from his wife, he was still bound to the De Courcy faction. Money had been paid away,—on his behalf, as alleged by Mr. Gagebee,—like running water; money for furniture, money for the lease of a house, money when he had been separated from his wife, money while she was living abroad. It had seemed to him that he had been made to pay for the entire support of the female moiety of the De Courcy family which had settled itself at Baden-Baden, from the day, and in some respects, from before the day, on which his wife had joined that moiety. He had done all in his power to struggle against these payments, but every such struggle had only cost him more money. Mr. Gagebee had written to him the civilest notes; but every note seemed to cost him money,—every word of each note seemed to find its way into some bill. His wife had died and her body had been brought back, with all the pomp befitting the body of an earl's daughter, that it might be laid with the old De Courcy dust,—at his expense. The embalming of her dear remains had cost a wondrous sum, and was a terrible blow upon him. All these items were showered upon

him by Mr. Gagebee with the most courteously worded demands for settlement as soon as convenient. And then, when he applied that Lady Alexandrina's small fortune should be made over to him,—according to a certain agreement under which he had made over all his possessions to his wife, should she have survived him,—Mr. Gagebee expressed a mild opinion that he was wrong in his law, and blandly recommended an amicable lawsuit. The amicable lawsuit was carried on. His own lawyer seemed to throw him over. Mr. Gagebee was successful in everything. No money came to him. Money was demanded from him on old scores and on new scores,—and all that he received to console him for what he had lost was a mourning-ring with his wife's hair,—for which, with sundry other mourning-rings, he had to pay,—and an introduction to Mr. Dobbs Broughton. To Mr. Dobbs Broughton he owed five hundred pounds; and as regarded a bill for the one-half of that sum which was due to-morrow, Mr. Dobbs Broughton had refused to grant him renewal for a single month!

I know no more uncomfortable walking than that which falls to the lot of men who go into the City to look for money, and who find none. Of all the lost steps trodden by men, surely the steps lost after that fashion are the most melancholy. It is not only that they are so vain, but that they are accompanied by so killing a sense of shame! To wait about in dingy rooms, which look on to bare walls, and are approached through some Hook Court; or to keep appointments at a low coffee-house, to which trystings the money-lender will not trouble himself to come unless it pleases him; to be civil, almost suppliant, to a

cunning knave whom the borrower loathes; to be refused thrice, and then cheated with his eyes open on the fourth attempt; to submit himself to vulgarity of the foulest kind, and to have to seem to like it; to be badgered, reviled, and at last accused of want of honesty by the most fraudulent of mankind; and at the same time to be clearly conscious of the ruin that is coming,—this is the fate of him who goes into the City to find money, not knowing where it is to be found!

Crosbie went along the lane into Lombard Street, and then he stood still for a moment to think. Though he knew a good deal of affairs in general, he did not quite know what would happen to him if his bill should be dishonoured. That somebody would bring it to him noted, and require him instantly to put his hand into his pocket and bring out the amount of the bill, plus the amount of certain expenses, he thought that he did know. And he knew that were he in trade he would become a bankrupt; and he was well aware that such an occurrence would prove him to be insolvent. But he did not know what his creditors would immediately have the power of doing. That the fact of the bill having been dishonoured would reach the Board under which he served,—and, therefore, also the fact that he had had recourse to such bill transactions,—this alone was enough to fill him with dismay. In early life he had carried his head so high, he had been so much more than a mere government clerk, that the idea of the coming disgrace almost killed him. Would it not be well that he should put an end to himself, and thus escape? What was there in the world now for which it was worth his while to live? Lily, whom he had once gained, and by that gain had placed himself high

in all hopes of happiness and riches,—whom he had then thrown away from him, and who had again seemed to be almost within his reach,—Lily had so refused him that he knew not how to approach her with a further prayer. And, had she not refused him, how could he have told her of his load of debt? As he stood at the corner where the lane runs into Lombard Street, he came for a while to think almost more of Lily than of his rejected bill. Then, as he thought of both his misfortunes together, he asked himself whether a pistol would not conveniently put an end to them together.

At that moment a loud, harsh voice greeted his ear. "Hallo, Crosbie, what brings you so far east? One does not often see you in the City." It was the voice of Sir Raffle Buffle, which in former days had been very odious to Crosbie's ears;—for Sir Raffle Buffle had once been the presiding genius of the office to which Crosbie still belonged.

"No, indeed, not very often," said Crosbie, smiling. Who can tell, who has not felt it, the pain that goes to the forcing of such smiles? But Sir Raffle was not an acutely observant person, and did not see that anything was wrong.

"I suppose you 're doing a little business?" said Sir Raffle. "If a man has kept a trifle of money by him, this certainly is the time for turning it. You have always been wide-awake about such things."

"No, indeed," said Crosbie. If he could only make up his mind that he would shoot himself, would it not be a pleasant thing to inflict some condign punishment on this odious man before he left the world? But Crosbie knew that he was not going to shoot himself,

and he knew also that he had no power of inflicting condign punishment on Sir Raffle Buffle. He could only hate the man, and curse him inwardly.

"Ah, ha!" said Sir Raffle. "You would n't be here unless you knew where a good thing is to be picked up. But I must be off. I 'm on the Rocky Mountain Canal Company Directory. I 'm not above taking my two guineas a day. Good-bye, my boy. Remember me to old Optimist." And so Sir Raffle passed on, leaving Crosbie still standing at the corner of the lane.

What was he to do? This interruption had at least seemed to drive Lily from his mind, and to send his ideas back to the consideration of his pecuniary difficulties. He thought of his own bank, a West-End establishment at which he was personally known to many of the clerks, and where he had been heretofore treated with great consideration. But of late his balances had been very low, and more than once he had been reminded that he had overdrawn his account. He knew well that the distinguished firm of Bounce, Bounce and Bounce would not cash a bill for him or lend him money without security. He did not even dare to ask them to do so.

On a sudden he jumped into a cab, and was driven back to his office. A thought had come upon him. He would throw himself upon the kindness of a friend there. Hitherto he had contrived to hold his head so high above the clerks below him, so high before the Commissioners who were above him, that none there suspected him to be a man in difficulty. It not seldom happens that a man's character stands too high for his interest,—so high that it cannot be maintained, and so high that any fall will be dangerous. And so it was

with Crosbie and his character at the General Committee Office. The man to whom he was now thinking of applying as his friend was a certain Mr. Butterwell, who had been his predecessor in the secretary's chair, and who now filled the less onerous but more dignified position of a Commissioner. Mr. Crosbie had somewhat despised Mr. Butterwell, and had of late years not been averse to showing that he did so. He had snubbed Mr. Butterwell, and Mr. Butterwell, driven to his wits' ends, had tried a fall or two with him. In all these struggles Crosbie had had the best of it, and Butterwell had gone to the wall. Nevertheless, for the sake of official decency, and from certain wise remembrances of the sources of official comfort and official discomfort, Mr. Butterwell had always maintained a show of outward friendship with the secretary. They smiled and were gracious, called each other Butterwell and Crosbie, and abstained from all cat-and-dog absurdities. Nevertheless, it was the frequently expressed opinion of every clerk in the office that Mr. Butterwell hated Mr. Crosbie like poison. This was the man to whom Crosbie suddenly made up his mind that he would have recourse.

As he was driven back to his office he resolved that he would make a plunge at once at the difficulty. He knew that Butterwell was fairly rich, and he knew also that he was good-natured—with that sort of sleepy good-nature which is not active for philanthropic purposes, but which dislikes to incur the pain of refusing. And then Mr. Butterwell was nervous, and if the thing was managed well, he might be cheated out of an assent, before time had been given him in which to pluck up courage for refusing. But Crosbie doubted his own

courage also,—fearing that if he gave himself time for hesitation he would hesitate, and that, hesitating, he would feel the terrible disgrace of the thing and not do it. So, without going to his own desk, or ridding himself of his hat, he went at once to Butterwell's room. When he opened the door, he found Mr. Butterwell alone, reading The Times. "Butterwell," said he, beginning to speak before he had even closed the door, "I have come to you in great distress. I wonder whether you can help me; I want you to lend me five hundred pounds? It must be for not less than three months."

Mr. Butterwell dropped the paper from his hands, and stared at the secretary over his spectacles.

CHAPTER XV.

"I SUPPOSE I MUST LET YOU HAVE IT."

Crosbie had been preparing the exact words with which he assailed Mr. Butterwell for the last quarter of an hour before they were uttered. There is always a difficulty in the choice, not only of the words with which money should be borrowed, but of the fashion after which they should be spoken. There is the slow, deliberate manner, in using which the borrower attempts to carry the wished-for lender along with him by force of argument, and to prove that the desire to borrow shows no imprudence on his own part, and that a tendency to lend will show none on the part of the intended lender. It may be said that this mode fails oftener than any other. There is the piteous manner, —the plea for commiseration. "My dear fellow, unless you will see me through now, upon my word I shall be very badly off." And this manner may be divided again into two. There is the plea piteous with a lie, and the plea piteous with a truth. "You shall have it again in two months as sure as the sun rises." That is generally the plea piteous with a lie. Or it may be as follows: "It is only fair to say that I don't quite know when I can pay it back." This is the plea piteous with a truth, and upon the whole I

think that this is generally the most successful mode of borrowing. And there is the assured demand,—which betokens a close intimacy. "Old fellow, can you let me have thirty pounds? No. Just put your name, then, on the back of this, and I 'll get it done in the City." The worst of that manner is, that the bill so often does not get itself done in the City. Then there is the sudden attack,—that being the manner to which Crosbie had recourse in the present instance. That there are other modes of borrowing by means of which youth becomes indebted to age, and love to respect, and ignorance to experience, is a matter of course. It will be understood that I am here speaking only of borrowing and lending between the Butterwells and Crosbies of the world. "I have come to you in great distress," said Crosbie. "I wonder whether you can help me. I want you to lend me five hundred pounds." Mr. Butterwell, when he heard the words, dropped the paper which he was reading from his hand, and stared at Crosbie over his spectacles.

"Five hundred pounds," he said. "Dear me, Crosbie; that 's a large sum of money."

"Yes, it is,—a very large sum. Half that is what I want at once; but I shall want the other half in a month."

"I thought that you were always so much above the world in money matters. Gracious me;—nothing that I have heard for a long time has astonished me more. I don't know why, but I always thought that you had your things so very snug."

Crosbie was aware that he had made one very great step towards success. The idea had been presented to Mr. Butterwell's mind, and had not been instantly

rejected as a scandalously iniquitous idea, as an idea to which no reception could be given for a moment. Crosbie had not been treated as was the needy knife-grinder, and had ground to stand upon while he urged his request. "I have been so pressed since my marriage," he said, "that it has been impossible for me to keep things straight."

"But Lady Alexandrina——"

"Yes; of course; I know. I do not like to trouble you with my private affairs;—there is nothing, I think, so bad as washing one's dirty linen in public;—but the truth is, that I am only now free from the rapacity of the De Courcys. You would hardly believe me if I told you what I 've had to pay. What do you think of two hundred and forty-five pounds for bringing her body over here, and burying it at De Courcy?"

"I 'd have left it where it was."

"And so would I. You don't suppose I ordered it to be done. Poor dear thing! If it could do her any good, God knows I would not begrudge it. We had a bad time of it when we were together, but I would have spared nothing for her, alive or dead, that was reasonable. But to make me pay for bringing the body over here, when I never had a shilling with her! By George, it was too bad. And that oaf John De Courcy,—I had to pay his travelling bill too."

"He did n't come to be buried;—did he?"

"It 's too disgusting to talk of, Butterwell; it is indeed. And when I asked for her money that was settled upon me,—it was only two thousand pounds,—they made me go to law, and it seems there was no two thousand pounds to settle. If I like, I can have another lawsuit with the sisters, when the mother is

dead. Oh, Butterwell, I have made such a fool of myself! I have come to such shipwreck! Oh, Butterwell, if you could but know it all!"

"Are you free from the De Courcys now?"

"I owe Gagebee, the man who married the other woman, over a thousand pounds. But I pay that off at two hundred a year, and he has a policy on my life."

"What do you owe that for?"

"Don't ask me. Not that I mind telling you;—furniture, and the lease of a house, and his bill for the marriage settlement,—d—— him."

"God bless me! They seem to have been very hard upon you."

"A man does n't marry an earl's daughter for nothing, Butterwell. And then to think what I lost! It can't be helped now, you know. As a man makes his bed he must lie on it. I am sometimes so mad with myself when I think over it all,—that I should like to blow my brains out."

"You must not talk in that way, Crosbie. I hate to hear a man talk like that."

"I don't mean that I shall. I 'm too much of a coward, I fancy." A man who desires to soften another man's heart should always abuse himself. In softening a woman's heart he should abuse her. "But life has been so bitter with me for the last three years! I have n't had an hour of comfort;—not an hour. I don't know why I should trouble you with all this, Butterwell. Oh,—about the money; yes; that 's just how I stand. I owe Gagebee something over a thousand pounds, which is arranged as I have told you. Then there were debts, due by my wife,—

at least some of them were, I suppose,—and that horrid, ghastly funeral,—and debts, I don't doubt, due by the cursed old countess. At any rate, to get myself clear I raised something over four hundred pounds, and now I owe five, which must be paid, part to-morrow, and the remainder this day month."

"And you 've no security?"

"Not a rag, not a shred, not a line, not an acre. There 's my salary, and after paying Gagebee what comes due to him, I can manage to let you have the money within twelve months,—that is, if you can lend it me. I can just do that and live; and if you will assist me with the money, I will do so. That 's what I 've brought myself to by my own folly."

"Five hundred pounds is such a large sum of money."

"Indeed it is."

"And without any security!"

"I know, Butterwell, that I 've no right to ask for it. I feel that. Of course I should pay you what interest you please."

"Money 's about seven now," said Butterwell.

"I 've not the slightest objection to seven per cent.," said Crosbie.

"But that 's on security," said Butterwell.

"You can name your own terms," said Crosbie.

Mr. Butterwell got out of his chair, and walked about the room with his hands in his pockets. He was thinking at that moment what Mrs. Butterwell would say to him. "Will an answer do to-morrow morning?" he said. "I would much rather have it to-day," said Crosbie. Then Mr. Butterwell took another turn about the room. "I suppose I must let you have it," he said.

"Butterwell," said Crosbie, "I 'm eternally obliged to you. It 's hardly too much to say that you 've saved me from ruin."

"Of course I was joking about interest," said Butterwell. "Five per cent. is the proper thing. You 'd better let me have a little acknowledgment. I 'll give you the first half to-morrow."

They were genuine tears which filled Crosbie's eyes, as he seized hold of the senior's hands. "Butterwell," he said, "what am I to say to you?"

"Nothing at all;—nothing at all."

"Your kindness makes me feel that I ought not to have come to you."

"Oh, nonsense. By-the-bye, would you mind telling Thompson to bring those papers to me which I gave him yesterday? I promised Optimist that I would read them before three, and it 's past two now." So saying he sat himself down at his table, and Crosbie felt that he was bound to leave the room.

Mr. Butterwell, when he was left alone, did not read the papers which Thompson brought him; but sat, instead, thinking of his five hundred pounds. "Just put them down," he said to Thompson. So the papers were put down, and there they lay all that day and all the next. Then Thompson took them away again, and it is to be hoped that somebody read them. Five hundred pounds! It was a large sum of money, and Crosbie was a man for whom Mr. Butterwell in truth felt no very strong affection. "Of course he must have it now," he said to himself. "But where should I be if anything happened to him?" And then he remembered that Mrs. Butterwell had especially disliked Mr. Crosbie,—disliked him because she knew that he

snubbed her husband. "But it 's hard to refuse, when one man has known another for more than ten years." Then he comforted himself somewhat with the reflection, that Crosbie would no doubt make himself more pleasant for the future than he had done lately, and with a second reflection, that Crosbie's life was a good life,—and with a third, as to his own great goodness, in assisting a brother officer. Nevertheless, as he sat looking out of the omnibus window, on his journey home to Putney, he was not altogether comfortable in his mind. Mrs. Butterwell was a very prudent woman.

But Crosbie was very comfortable in his mind on that afternoon. He had hardly dared to hope for success, but he had been successful. He had not even thought of Butterwell as a possible fountain of supply, till his mind had been brought back to the affairs of his office by the voice of Sir Raffle Buffle at the corner of the street. The idea that his bill would be dishonoured, and that tidings of his insolvency would be conveyed to the Commissioners at his Board, had been dreadful to him. The way in which he had been treated by Musselboro and Dobbs Broughton had made him hate City men, and what he supposed to be City ways. Now there had come to him a relief which suddenly made everything feel light. He could almost think of Mr. Mortimer Gagebee without disgust. Perhaps after all there might be some happiness yet in store for him. Might it not be possible that Lily would yet accept him in spite of the chilling letter,—the freezing letter which he had received from Lily's mother? Of one thing he was quite certain. If ever he had an opportunity of pleading his own cause with

her, he certainly would tell her everything respecting his own money difficulties.

In that last resolve I think we may say that he was right. If Lily would ever listen to him again at all, she certainly would not be deterred from marrying him by his own story of his debts.

CHAPTER XVI.

LILY DALE GOES TO LONDON.

One morning towards the end of March the squire rapped at the window of the drawing-room of the Small House, in which Mrs. Dale and her daughter were sitting. He had a letter in his hand, and both Lily and her mother knew that he had come down to speak about the contents of the letter. It was always a sign of good-humour on the squire's part, this rapping at the window. When it became necessary to him in his gloomy moods to see his sister-in-law, he would write a note to her, and she would go across to him at the Great House. At other times, if, as Lily would say, he was just then neither sweet nor bitter, he would go round to the front door and knock, and be admitted after the manner of ordinary people; but when he was minded to make himself thoroughly pleasant he would come and rap at the drawing-room window, as he was doing now.

"I 'll let you in, uncle; wait a moment," said Lily, as she unbolted the window which opened out upon the lawn. "It 's dreadfully cold, so come in as fast as you can."

"It 's not cold at all," said the squire. "It 's more like spring than any morning we 've had yet. I 've been sitting without a fire."

"You won't catch us without one for the next two months; will he, mamma? You have got a letter, uncle. Is it for us to see?"

"Well,—yes; I 've brought it down to show you. Mary, what do you think is going to happen?"

A terrible idea occurred to Mrs. Dale at that moment, but she was much too wise to give it expression. Could it be possible that the squire was going to make a fool of himself and get married? "I am very bad at guessing," said Mrs. Dale. "You had better tell us."

"Bernard is going to be married," said Lily.

"How did you know?" said the squire.

"I did n't know. I only guessed."

"Then you 've guessed right," said the squire, a little annoyed at having his news thus taken out of his mouth.

"I am so glad," said Mrs. Dale; "and I know from your manner that you like the match."

"Well,—yes. I don't know the young lady, but I think that upon the whole I do like it. It 's quite time, you know, that he got married."

"He 's not thirty yet," said Mrs. Dale.

"He will be in a month or two."

"And who is it, uncle?"

"Well,—as you 're so good at guessing, I suppose you can guess that?"

"It 's not that Miss Partridge he used to talk about?"

"No; it 's not Miss Partridge,—I 'm glad to say. I don't believe that the Partridges have a shilling among them."

"Then I suppose it 's an heiress?" said Mrs. Dale.

"No; not an heiress; but she will have some

money of her own. And she has connections in Barsetshire, which makes it pleasant."

"Connections in Barsetshire! Who can it be?" said Lily.

"Her name is Emily Dunstable," said the squire, "and she is the niece of that Miss Dunstable who married Dr. Thorne and who lives at Chaldicotes."

"She was the woman who had millions upon millions," said Lily, "all got by selling ointment."

"Never mind how it was got," said the squire, angrily. "Miss Dunstable married most respectably, and has always made a most excellent use of her money."

"And will Bernard's wife have all her fortune?" asked Lily.

"She will have twenty thousand pounds the day she marries, and I suppose that will be all."

"And quite enough too," said Mrs. Dale.

"It seems that old Mr. Dunstable, as he was called, who, as Lily says, sold the ointment, quarrelled with his son or with his son's widow, and left nothing either to her or her child. The mother is dead, and the aunt, Dr. Thorne's wife, has always provided for the child. That 's how it is, and Bernard is going to marry her. They are to be married at Chaldicotes in May."

"I am delighted to hear it," said Mrs. Dale.

"I 've known Dr. Thorne for the last forty years;" and the squire now spoke in a low, melancholy tone. "I 've written to him to say that the young people shall have the old place up there to themselves if they like it."

"What! and turn you out?" said Mrs. Dale.

"That would not matter," said the squire.

"You 'd have to come and live with us," said Lily, taking him by the hand.

"It does n't matter much now where I live," said the squire.

"Bernard will never consent to that," said Mrs. Dale.

"I wonder whether she 'll ask me to be a bridesmaid?" said Lily. "They say that Chaldicotes is such a pretty place, and I should see all the Barsetshire people that I 've been hearing about from Grace. Poor Grace! I know that the Grantlys and the Thornes are very intimate. Fancy Bernard having twenty thousand pounds from the making of ointment!"

"What does it matter to you where it comes from?" said the squire, half in anger.

"Not in the least; only it sounds so odd. I do hope she 's a nice girl."

Then the squire produced a photograph of Emily Dunstable which his nephew had sent to him, and they all pronounced her to be very pretty, to be very much like a lady, and to be very good-humoured. The squire was evidently pleased with the match, and therefore the ladies were pleased also. Bernard Dale was the heir to the estate, and his marriage was of course a matter of moment; and as on such properties as that of Allington money is always wanted, the squire may be forgiven for the great importance which he attached to the young lady's fortune. "Bernard could hardly have married prudently without any money," he said, —"unless he had chosen to wait till I am gone."

"And then he would have been too old to marry at all," said Lily.

But the squire's budget of news had not yet been

emptied. He told them soon afterwards that he himself had been summoned up to London. Bernard had written to him, begging him to come and see the young lady; and the family lawyer had written also, saying that his presence in town would be very desirable. "It is very troublesome, of course; but I shall go," said the squire. "It will do you all the good in the world," said Mrs. Dale; "and of course you ought to know her personally before the marriage." And then the squire made a clean breast of it and declared his full purpose. "I was thinking that, perhaps, Lily would not object to go up to London with me."

"Oh, uncle Christopher, I should so like it," said Lily.

"If your mamma does not object."

"Mamma never objects to anything. I should like to see her objecting!" And Lily shook her head at her mother.

"Bernard says that Miss Dunstable particularly wants to see you."

"Does she indeed? And I particularly want to see Miss Dunstable. How nice! Mamma, I don't think I 've ever been in London since I wore short frocks. Do you remember taking us to the pantomime? Only think how many years ago that is. I 'm quite sure that it 's time that Bernard should get married. Uncle, I hope you 're prepared to take me to the play."

"We must see about that!"

"And the opera, and Madame Tussaud, and the Horticultural Gardens, and the new conjurer who makes a woman lie upon nothing. The idea of my going to London! And then I suppose I shall be one of the bridesmaids. I declare, a new vista of life is

opening out to me! Mamma, you must n't be dull while I 'm away. It won't be very long, I suppose, uncle!"

"About a month, probably," said the squire.

"Oh, mamma; what will you do?"

"Never mind me, Lily."

"You must get Bell and the children to come. But I cannot imagine living away from home a month. I was never away from home a month in my life."

And Lily did go up to town with her uncle, two days only having been allowed to her for her preparations. There was very much for her to think of in such a journey. It was not only that she would see Emily Dunstable, who was to be her cousin's wife, and that she would go to the play and visit the new conjurer's entertainment, but that she would be in the same city both with Adolphus Crosbie and with John Eames. Not having personal experience of the wideness of London, and of the wilderness which it is,—of the distance which is set there between persons who are not purposely brought together,—it seemed to her fancy as though for this month of her absence from home she would be brought into close contiguity with both her lovers. She had hitherto felt herself to be at any rate safe in her fortress at Allington. When Crosbie had written to her mother, making a renewed offer which had been rejected, Lily had felt that she certainly need not see him unless it pleased her to do so. He could hardly force himself upon her at Allington. And as to John Eames, though he would, of course, be welcome at Allington as often as he pleased to show himself, still there was a security in the place. She was so much at home there that she could always

be mistress of the occasion. She knew that she could talk to him at Allington as though from ground higher than that on which he stood himself; but she felt that this would hardly be the case if she should chance to meet him in London. Crosbie probably would not come in her way. Crosbie, she thought,—and she blushed for the man she loved, as the idea came across her mind,—would be afraid of meeting her uncle. But John Eames would certainly find her; and she was led by the experience of latter days to imagine that John would never cross her path without renewing his attempts.

But she said no word of all this, even to her mother. She was contented to confine her outspoken expectations to Emily Dunstable, and the play, and the conjurer. "The chances are ten to one against my liking her, mamma," she said.

"I don't see that, my dear."

"I feel to be too old to think that I shall ever like any more new people. Three years ago I should have been quite sure that I should love a new cousin. It would have been like having a new dress: But I 've come to think that an old dress is the most comfortable, and an old cousin certainly the best."

The squire had had taken for them a gloomy lodging in Sackville Street. Lodgings in London are always gloomy. Gloomy colours wear better than bright ones for curtains and carpets, and the keepers of lodgings in London seem to think that a certain dinginess of appearance is respectable. I never saw a London lodging in which any attempt at cheerfulness had been made, and I do not think that any such attempt, if made, would pay. The lodging-seeker would be fright-

ened and dismayed, and would unconsciously be led to fancy that something was wrong. Ideas of burglars and improper persons would present themselves. This is so certainly the case that I doubt whether any well-conditioned lodging-house matron could be induced to show rooms that were prettily draped or pleasantly coloured. The big drawing-room and two large bedrooms which the squire took, were all that was proper, and were as brown, and as gloomy, and as ill-suited for the comforts of ordinary life as though they had been prepared for two prisoners. But Lily was not so ignorant as to expect cheerful lodgings in London, and was satisfied. "And what are we to do now?" said Lily, as soon as they found themselves settled. It was still March, and whatever may have been the nature of the weather at Allington, it was very cold in London. They reached Sackville Street about five in the evening, and an hour was taken up in unpacking their trunks and making themselves as comfortable as their circumstances allowed. "And now what are we to do?" said Lily.

"I told them to have dinner for us at half-past six."

"And what after that? Won't Bernard come to us to-night? I expected him to be standing on the door-steps waiting for us with his bride in his hand."

"I don't suppose Bernard will be here to-night," said the squire. "He did not say that he would, and as for Miss Dunstable, I promised to take you to her aunt's house to-morrow."

"But I wanted to see her to-night. Well,—of course bridesmaids must wait upon brides. And ladies with twenty thousand pounds can't be expected to run about like common people. As for Bernard,—but

Bernard never was in a hurry." Then they dined, and when the squire had very nearly fallen asleep over a bottle of port wine which had been sent in for him from some neighbouring public-house, Lily began to feel that it was very dull. And she looked round the room, and she thought that it was very ugly. And she calculated that thirty evenings so spent would seem to be very long. And she reflected that the hours were probably going much more quickly with Emily Dunstable, who, no doubt, at this moment had Bernard Dale by her side. And then she told herself that the hours were not tedious with her at home, while sitting with her mother, with all her daily occupations within her reach. But in so telling herself she took herself to task, inquiring of herself whether such an assurance was altogether true. Were not the hours sometimes tedious even at home? And in this way her mind wandered off to thoughts upon life in general, and she repeated to herself over and over again the two words which she had told John Eames that she would write in her journal. The reader will remember those two words;—Old Maid. And she had written them in her book, making each letter a capital, and round them she had drawn a scroll, ornamented after her own fashion, and she had added the date in quaintly formed figures,—for in such matters Lily had some little skill and a dash of fun to direct it; and she had inscribed below it an Italian motto,—"Who goes softly, goes safely;" and above her work of art she had put a heading—"As arranged by Fate for L. D."

Now she thought of all this, and reflected whether Emily Dunstable was in truth very happy. Presently the tears came into her eyes, and she got up and went

to the window, as though she were afraid that her uncle might wake and see them. And as she looked out on the blank street, she muttered a word or two—"Dear mother! Dearest mother!" Then the door was opened, and her cousin Bernard announced himself. She had not heard his knock at the door as she had been thinking of the two words in her book.

"What; Bernard!—ah, yes, of course," said the squire, rubbing his eyes as he strove to wake himself. "I was n't sure you would come, but I 'm delighted to see you. I wish you joy with all my heart,—with all my heart."

"Of course I should come," said Bernard. "Dear Lily, this is so good of you. Emily is so delighted."

Then Lily spoke her congratulations warmly, and there was no trace of a tear in her eyes, and she was thoroughly happy as she sat by her cousin's side and listened to his raptures about Emily Dunstable. "And you will be so fond of her aunt," he said.

"But is she not awfully rich?" said Lily.

"Frightfully rich," said Bernard; "but really you would hardly find it out if nobody told you. Of course she lives in a big house, and has a heap of servants; but she can't help that."

"I hate a heap of servants," said Lily.

Then there came another knock at the door, and who should enter the room but John Eames. Lily for a moment was taken aback, but it was only for a moment. She had been thinking so much of him that his presence disturbed her for an instant. "He probably will not know that I am here," she had said to herself; but she had not yet been three hours in London, and he was already with her! At first he hardly spoke

to her, addressing himself to the squire. "Lady Julia told me you were to be here, and as I start for the Continent early to-morrow morning, I thought you would let me come and see you before I went."

"I 'm always glad to see you, John," said the squire,—"very glad. And so you 're going abroad, are you?"

Then Johnny congratulated his old acquaintance, Bernard Dale, as to his coming marriage, and explained to them how Lady Julia in one of her letters had told him all about it, and had even given him the number in Sackville Street. "I suppose she learned it from you, Lily?" said the squire. "Yes, uncle, she did." And then there came questions as to John's projected journey to the Continent, and he explained that he was going on law business, on behalf of Mr. Crawley, to catch the dean and Mrs. Arabin, if it might be possible. "You see, sir, Mr. Toogood, who is Mr. Crawley's cousin, and also his lawyer, is my cousin too; and that 's why I 'm going." And still there had been hardly a word spoken between him and Lily.

"But you 're not a lawyer, John; are you?" said the squire.

"No. I 'm not a lawyer myself."

"Nor a lawyer's clerk."

"Certainly not a lawyer's clerk," said Johnny, laughing.

"Then why should you go?" asked Bernard Dale.

Then Johnny had to explain; and in doing so he became very eloquent as to the hardships of Mr. Crawley's case. "You see, sir, nobody can possibly believe that such a man as that stole twenty pounds."

"I do not for one," said Lily.

"God forbid that I should say he did," said the squire.

"I 'm quite sure he did n't," said Johnny, warming to his subject. "It could n't be that such a man as that should become a thief all at once. It 's not human nature, sir; is it?"

"It is very hard to know what is human nature," said the squire.

"It 's the general opinion down in Barsetshire that he did steal it," said Bernard. "Dr. Thorne was one of the magistrates who committed him, and I know he thinks so."

"I don't blame the magistrates in the least," said Johnny.

"That 's kind of you," said the squire.

"Of course you 'll laugh at me, sir; but you 'll see that we shall come out right. There 's some mystery in it of which we have n't got at the bottom as yet, and if there is anybody that can help us it 's the dean."

"If the dean knows anything, why has he not written and told what he knows?" said the squire.

"That 's what I can't say. The dean has not had an opportunity of writing since he heard,—even if he has yet heard,—that Mr. Crawley is to be tried. And then he and Mrs. Arabin are not together. It 's a long story, and I will not trouble you with it all; but at any rate I 'm going off to-morrow. Lily, can I do anything for you in Florence?"

"In Florence?" said Lily; "and are you really going to Florence? How I envy you."

"And who pays your expenses?" said the squire.

"Well;—as to my expenses, they are to be paid by a person who won't raise any unpleasant questions about the amount."

"I don't know what you mean," said the squire.

"He means himself," said Lily.

"Is he going to do it out of his own pocket?"

"He is," said Lily, looking at her lover.

"I 'm going to have a trip for my own fun," said Johnny, "and I shall pick up evidence on the road, as I 'm going;—that 's all."

Then Lily began to take an active part in the conversation, and a great deal was said about Mr. Crawley, and about Grace, and Lily declared that she would be very anxious to hear any news which John Eames might be able to send. "You know, John, how fond we are of your cousin Grace, at Allington? Are we not, uncle?"

"Yes, indeed," said the squire. "I thought her a very nice girl."

"If you should be able to learn anything that may be of use, John, how happy you will be."

"Yes, I shall," said Johnny.

"And I think it so good of you to go, John. But it is just like you. You were always generous." Soon after that he got up and went. It was very clear to him that he would have no moment in which to say a word alone to Lily; and if he could find such a moment, what good would such a word do him? It was as yet but a few weeks since she had positively refused him. And he too remembered very well those two words which she had told him that she would write in her book. As he had been coming to the house he had told himself that his coming would be,—could be of no use. And yet he was disappointed with the result of his visit, although she had spoken to him so sweetly.

"I suppose you 'll be gone when I come back?" he said.

"We shall be here a month," said the squire.

"I shall be back long before that, I hope," said Johnny. "Good-bye, sir. Good-bye, Dale. Good-bye, Lily." And he put out his hand to her.

"Good-bye, John." And then she added, almost in a whisper, "I think you are very, very right to go." How could he fail after that to hope as he walked home that she might still relent? And she also thought much of him, but her thoughts of him made her cling more firmly than ever to the two words. She could not bring herself to marry him; but, at least, she would not break his heart by becoming the wife of any one else. Soon after this Bernard Dale went also. I am not sure that he had been well pleased at seeing John Eames become suddenly the hero of the hour. When a young man is going to perform so important an act as that of marriage, he is apt to think that he ought to be the hero of the hour himself—at any rate among his own family.

Early on the next morning Lily was taken by her uncle to call upon Mrs. Thorne, and to see Emily Dunstable. Bernard was to meet them there, but it had been arranged that they should reach the house first. "There is nothing so absurd as these introductions," Bernard had said. "You go and look at her, and when you 've had time to look at her, then I 'll come!" So the squire and Lily went off to look at Emily Dunstable.

"You don't mean to say that she lives in that house?" said Lily, when the cab was stopped before an enormous mansion in one of the most fashionable of the London squares.

"I believe she does," said the squire.

"I never shall be able to speak to anybody living in such a house as that," said Lily. "A duke could n't have anything grander."

"Mrs. Thorne is richer than half the dukes," said the squire. Then the door was opened by a porter, and Lily found herself within the hall. Everything was very great, and very magnificent, and, as she thought, very uncomfortable. Presently she heard a loud, jovial voice on the stairs. "Mr. Dale, I 'm delighted to see you. And this is your niece Lily. Come up, my dear. There is a young woman upstairs, dying to embrace you. Never mind the umbrella. Put it down anywhere. I want to have a look at you, because Bernard swears that you 're so pretty." This was Mrs. Thorne, once Miss Dunstable, the richest woman in England, and the aunt of Bernard's bride. The reader may perhaps remember the advice which she once gave to Major Grantly, and her enthusiasm on that occasion. "There she is, Mr. Dale; what do you think of her?" said Mrs. Thorne, as she opened the door of a small sitting-room wedged in between two large saloons, in which Emily Dunstable was sitting.

"Aunt Martha, how can you be so ridiculous?" said the young lady.

"I suppose it is ridiculous to ask the question to which one really wants to have an answer," said Mrs. Thorne. "But Mr. Dale has, in truth, come to inspect you, and to form an opinion; and, in honest truth, I shall be very anxious to know what he thinks,—though, of course, he won't tell me."

The old man took the girl in his arms and kissed her

on both cheeks. "I have no doubt you will find out what I think," he said, "though I should never tell you."

"I generally do find out what people think," she said. "And so you 're Lily Dale?"

"Yes, I 'm Lily Dale."

"I have so often heard of you, particularly of late; for you must know that a certain Major Grantly is a friend of mine. We must take care that that affair comes off all right, must we not?"

"I hope it will." Then Lily turned to Emily Dunstable, and, taking her hand, went up and sat beside her, while Mrs. Thorne and the squire talked of the coming marriage. "How long have you been engaged?" said Lily.

"Really engaged, about three weeks. I think it is not more than three weeks ago."

"How very discreet Bernard has been. He never told us a word about it while it was going on."

"Men never do tell, I suppose," said Emily Dunstable.

"Of course you love him very dearly?" said Lily, not knowing what else to say.

"Of course I do."

"So do we. You know he 's almost a brother to us; that is, to me and my sister. We never had a brother of our own." And so the morning was passed till Lily was told by her uncle to come away, and was told also by Mrs. Thorne that she was to dine with them in the Square on that day. "You must not be surprised that my husband is not here," she said. "He is a very odd sort of man and he never comes to London if he can help it."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BAYSWATER ROMANCE.

EAMES had by no means done his work for that evening when he left Mr. Dale and Lily at their lodgings. He had other business on hand to which he had promised to give attention, and another person to see who would welcome his coming quite as warmly, though by no means as pleasantly, as Lily Dale. It was then just nine o'clock, and as he had told Miss Demolines,—Madalina we may as well call her now,—that he would be in Porchester Terrace by nine at the latest, it was incumbent on him to make haste. He got into a cab, and bid the cabman drive hard, and, lighting a cigar, began to inquire of himself whether it was well for him to hurry away from the presence of Lily Dale to that of Madalina Demolines. He felt that he was half ashamed of what he was doing. Though he declared to himself over and over again that he never had said a word, and never intended to say a word, to Madalina which all the world might not hear, yet he knew that he was doing amiss. He was doing amiss, and half repented it, and yet he was half proud of it. He was most anxious to be able to give himself credit for his constancy to Lily Dale; to be able to feel that he was steadfast in his passion; and yet he liked the idea of amusing himself with his

Bayswater romance, as he would call it, and was not without something of conceit as he thought of the progress he had made in it. "Love is one thing and amusement is another," he said to himself as he puffed the cigar-smoke out of his mouth; and in his heart he was proud of his own capacity for enjoyment. He thought it a fine thing, although at the same moment he knew it to be an evil thing,—this hurrying away from the young lady whom he really loved to another as to whom he thought it very likely that he should be called upon to pretend to love her. And he sang a little song as he went, "If she be not fair to me, what care I how fair she be." That was intended to apply to Lily, and was used as an excuse for his fickleness in going to Miss Demolines. And he was perhaps, too, a little conceited as to his mission to the Continent. Lily had told him that she was very glad that he was going,—that she thought him very right to go. The words had been pleasant to his ears, and Lily had never looked prettier in his eyes than when she had spoken them. Johnny, therefore, was rather proud of himself as he sat in the cab smoking his cigar. He had, moreover, beaten his old enemy Sir Raffle Buffle in another contest, and he felt that the world was smiling on him;—that the world was smiling on him in spite of his cruel fate in the matter of his real love-suit.

There was a mystery about the Bayswater romance which was not without its allurement, and a portion of the mystery was connected with Madalina's mother. Lady Demolines was very rarely seen, and John Eames could not quite understand what was the manner of life of that unfortunate lady. Her daughter usually spoke of her with affectionate regret as being unable

to appear on that particular occasion on account of some passing malady. She was suffering from a nervous headache, or was afflicted with bronchitis, or had been touched with rheumatism, so that she was seldom on the scene when Johnny was passing his time at Porchester Terrace. And yet he heard of her dining out, and going to plays and operas; and when he did chance to see her, he found that she was a sprightly old woman enough. I will not venture to say that he much regretted the absence of Lady Demolines, or that he was keenly alive to the impropriety of being left alone with the gentle Madalina; but the customary absence of the elder lady was an incident in the romance which did not fail to strike him.

Madalina was alone when he was shown up into the drawing-room on the evening of which we are speaking. "Mr. Eames," she said, "will you kindly look at that watch which is lying on the table?" She looked full at him with her great eyes wide open, and the tone of her voice was intended to show him that she was aggrieved.

"Yes, I see it," said John, looking down on Miss Demolines' little gold Geneva watch, with which he had already made sufficient acquaintance to know that it was worth nothing. "Shall I give it you?"

"No, Mr. Eames; let it remain there, that it may remind me, if it does not remind you, by how long a time you have broken your word."

"Upon my word I could n't help it;—upon my honour I could n't."

"Upon your honour, Mr. Eames!"

"I was obliged to go and see a friend who has just come to town from my part of the country."

"That is the friend, I suppose, of whom I have heard from Maria." It is to be feared that Conway Dalrymple had not been so guarded as he should have been in some of his conversations with Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, and that a word or two had escaped from him as to the love of John Eames for Lily Dale.

"I don't know what you may have heard," said Johnny, "but I was obliged to see these people before I left town. There is going to be a marriage and all that sort of thing."

"Who is going to be married?"

"One Captain Dale is going to be married to one Miss Dunstable."

"Oh! And as to one Miss Lily Dale,—is she to be married to anybody?"

"Not that I have heard of," said Johnny.

"She is not going to become the wife of one Mr. John Eames?" He did not wish to talk to Miss Demolines about Lily Dale. He did not choose to disown the imputation, or to acknowledge its truth. "Silence gives consent," she said. "If it be so, I congratulate you. I have no doubt she is a most charming young woman. It is about seven years, I believe, since that little affair with Mr. Crosbie, and therefore that, I suppose, may be considered as forgotten."

"It is only three years," said Johnny, angrily. "Besides, I don't know what that has to do with it."

"You need not be ashamed," said Madalina. "I have heard how well you behaved on that occasion. You were quite the *preux chevalier;* and if any gentleman ever deserved well of a lady you deserved well of her. I wonder how Mr. Crosbie felt when he met you the other day at Maria's. I had not heard anything

about it then, or I should have been much more interested in watching your meeting."

"I really can't say how he felt."

"I dare say not; but I saw him shake hands with you. And so Lily Dale has come to town?"

"Yes,—Miss Dale is here with her uncle."

"And you are going away to-morrow?"

"Yes,—and I am going away to-morrow."

After that there was a pause in the conversation. Eames was sick of it, and was very anxious to change the conversation. Miss Demolines was sitting in the shadow, away from the light, with her face half hidden by her hands. At last she jumped up, and came round and stood opposite to him. "I charge you to tell me truly, John Eames," she said, "whether Miss Lilian Dale is engaged to you as your future wife." He looked up into her face, but made no immediate answer. Then she repeated her demand. "I ask you whether you are engaged to marry Miss Lilian Dale, and I expect a reply."

"What makes you ask me such a question as that?"

"What makes me ask you? Do you deny my right to feel so much interest in you as to desire to know whether you are about to be married? Of course you can decline to tell me if you choose."

"And if I were to decline?"

"I should know then that it was true, and I should think that you were a coward."

"I don't see any cowardice in the matter. One does not talk about that kind of thing to everybody."

"Upon my word, Mr. Eames, you are complimentary;—indeed you are. To everybody! I am everybody,—am I? That is your idea of—friendship!

You may be sure that after that I shall ask no further questions."

"I did n't mean it in the way you 've taken it, Madalina."

"In what way did you mean it, sir? Everybody! Mr. Eames, you must excuse me if I say that I am not well enough this evening to bear the company of —everybody. I think you had better leave me. I think that you had better go."

"Are you angry with me?"

"Yes, I am;—very angry. Because I have condescended to feel an interest in your welfare, and have asked you a question which I thought that our intimacy justified, you tell me that that is a kind of thing that you will not talk about to—everybody. I beg you to understand that I will not be your everybody. Mr. Eames, there is the door."

Things had now become very serious. Hitherto Johnny had been seated comfortably in the corner of a sofa, and had not found himself bound to move, though Miss Demolines was standing before him. But now it was absolutely necessary that he should do something. He must either go, or else he must make entreaty to be allowed to remain. Would it not be expedient that he should take the lady at her word and escape? She was still pointing to the door, and the way was open to him. If he were to walk out now of course he would never return, and there would be the end of the Bayswater romance. If he remained it might be that the romance would become troublesome. He got up from his seat, and had almost resolved that he would go. Had she not somewhat relaxed the majesty of her anger as he rose, had the fire of her

eye not been somewhat quenched and the lines of her mouth softened, I think that he would have gone. The romance would have been over, and he would have felt that it had come to an inglorious end; but it would have been well for him that he should have gone. Though the fire was somewhat quenched and the lines were somewhat softened, she was still pointing to the door. "Do you mean it?" he said.

"I do mean it,—certainly."

"And this is to be the end of everything?"

"I do not know what you mean by everything. It is a very little everything to you, I should say. I do not quite understand your everything and your everybody."

"I will go, if you wish me to go, of course."

"I do wish it."

"But before I go, you must permit me to excuse myself. I did not intend to offend you. I merely meant——"

"You merely meant! Give me an honest answer to a downright question. Are you engaged to Miss Lilian Dale?"

"No;—I am not."

"Upon your honour?"

"Do you think that I would tell you a falsehood about it? What I meant was that it is a kind of thing one does n't like talking about, merely because stories are bandied about. People are so fond of saying that this man is engaged to that woman, and of making up tales; and it seems to be so foolish to contradict such things."

"But you know that you used to be very fond of her?"

He had taken up his hat when he had risen from the sofa, and was still standing with it ready in his hand. He was even now half-minded to escape; and the name of Lily Dale in Miss Demolines' mouth was so distasteful to him that he would have done so,—he would have gone in sheer disgust, had she not stood in his way, so that he could not escape without moving her, or going round behind the sofa. She did not stir to make way for him, and it may be that she understood that he was her prisoner, in spite of her late command to him to go. It may be, also, that she understood his vexation and the cause of it, and that she saw the expediency of leaving Lily Dale alone for the present. At any rate, she pressed him no more upon the matter. "Are we to be friends again?" she said.

"I hope so," replied Johnny.

"There is my hand, then." So Johnny took her hand and pressed it, and held it a little while,—just long enough to seem to give a meaning to the action. "You will get to understand me some day," she said, "and will learn that I do not like to be reckoned among the everybodies by those for whom I really—really—really have a regard. When I am angry, I am angry."

"You were very angry just now, when you showed me the way to the door."

"And I meant it too,—for the minute. Only think,—supposing you had gone! We should never have seen each other again;—never, never! What a change one word may make!"

"One word often does make a change."

"Does it not? Just a little 'yes,' or 'no.' A 'no' is said when a 'yes' is meant, and then there comes no

second chance, and what a change that may be from bright hopes to desolation! Or, worse again, a 'yes' is said when a 'no' should be said—when the speaker knows that it should be 'no.' What a difference that 'no' makes! When one thinks of it, one wonders that a woman should ever say anything but 'no.'"

"They never did say anything else to me," said Johnny.

"I don't believe it. I dare say the truth is, you never asked anybody."

"Did anybody ever ask you?"

"What would you give to know? But I will tell you frankly—yes. And once,—once I thought that my answer would not have been a 'no.'"

"But you changed your mind?"

"When the moment came I could not bring myself to say the word that should rob me of my liberty for ever. I had said 'no' to him often enough before,—poor fellow; and on this occasion he told me that he asked for the last time. 'I shall not give myself another chance,' he said, 'for I shall be on board ship within a week.' I merely bade him good-bye. It was the only answer I gave him. He understood me, and since that day his foot has never pressed his native soil."

"And was it all because you are so fond of your liberty?" said Johnny.

"Perhaps,—I did not—love him," said Miss Demolines, thoughtfully. She was now again seated in her chair, and John Eames had gone back to his corner of the sofa. "If I had really loved him I suppose it would have been otherwise. He was a gallant fellow, and had two thousand a year of his own, in India stock and other securities."

"Dear me! And he has not married yet?"

"He wrote me word to say that he would never marry till I was married,—but that on the day that he should hear of my wedding, he would go to the first single woman near him and propose. It was a droll thing to say; was it not?"

"The single woman ought to feel herself flattered."

"He would find plenty to accept him. Besides being so well off he was a very handsome fellow, and is connected with people of title. He had everything to recommend him."

"And yet you refused him so often?"

"Yes. You think I was foolish;—do you not?"

"I don't think you were at all foolish if you did n't care for him."

"It was my destiny, I suppose. I dare say I was wrong. Other girls marry without violent love, and do very well afterwards. Look at Maria Clutterbuck."

The name of Maria Clutterbuck had become odious to John Eames. As long as Miss Demolines would continue to talk about herself he could listen with some amount of gratification. Conversation on that subject was the natural progress of the Bayswater romance. And if Madalina would only call her friend by her present name he had no strong objection to an occasional mention of the lady; but the combined names of Maria Clutterbuck had come to be absolutely distasteful to him. He did not believe in the Maria Clutterbuck friendship,—either in its past or present existence, as described by Madalina. Indeed, he did not put strong faith in anything that Madalina said to him. In the handsome gentleman with two thousand a year he did not believe at all. But the handsome

gentleman had only been mentioned once in the course of his acquaintance with Miss Demolines, whereas Maria Clutterbuck had come up so often! "Upon my word I must wish you good-bye," he said. "It is going on for eleven o'clock, and I have to start to-morrow at seven."

"What difference does that make?"

"A fellow wants to get a little sleep, you know."

"Go then; go and yet your sleep. What a sleepy-headed generation it is." Johnny longed to ask her whether the last generation was less sleepy-headed, and whether the gentleman with two thousand a year had sat up talking all night before he pressed his foot for the last time on his native soil; but he did not dare. As he said to himself afterwards, "It would not do to bring the Bayswater romance too suddenly to its termination!" "But before you go," she continued, "I must say a word to you about that picture. Did you speak to Mr. Dalrymple?"

"I did not. I have been so busy with different things that I have not seen him."

"And now you are going?"

"Well,—to tell the truth, I think I shall see him to-night, in spite of my being so sleepy-headed. I wrote him a line that I would look in and smoke a cigar with him if he chanced to be at home!"

"And that is why you want to go. A gentleman cannot live without his cigar now."

"It is especially at your bidding that I am going to see him."

"Go, then,—and make your friend understand that if he continues this picture of his, he will bring himself to great trouble, and will probably ruin the woman for

whom he professes, I presume, to feel something like friendship. You may tell him that Mrs. Van Siever has already heard of it."

"Who told her?" demanded Johnny.

"Never mind. You need not look at me like that. It was not I. Do you suppose that secrets can be kept when so many people know them? Every servant in Maria's house knows all about it."

"As for that, I don't suppose Mrs. Broughton makes any great secret of it."

"Do you think she has told Mr. Broughton? I am sure she has not. I may say I know she has not. Maria Clutterbuck is infatuated. There is no other excuse to be made for her."

"Good-bye," said Johnny, hurriedly.

"And you really are going?"

"Well,—yes. I suppose so."

"Go, then. I have nothing more to say to you."

"I shall come and call directly I return," said Johnny.

"You may do as you please about that, sir."

"Do you mean that you won't be glad to see me again?"

"I am not going to flatter you, Mr. Eames. Mamma will be well by that time, I hope, and I do not mind telling you that you are a favourite with her." Johnny thought that this was particularly kind, as he had seen so very little of the old lady. "If you choose to call upon her," said Madalina, "of course she will be glad to see you."

"But I was speaking of yourself, you know," and Johnny permitted himself for a moment to look tenderly at her.

"Then from myself pray understand that I will say nothing to flatter your self-love."

"I thought you would be kinder just when I was going away."

"I think I have been quite kind enough. As you observed yourself just now, it is nearly eleven o'clock, and I must ask you to go away. *Bon voyage*, and a happy return to you."

"And you will be glad to see me when I am back? Tell me that you will be glad to see me."

"I will tell you nothing of the kind. Mr. Eames, if you do, I will be very angry with you." But he did; —and then he went.

On his way back to his own lodgings he did call on Conway Dalrymple, and in spite of his need for early rising, sat smoking with the artist for an hour. "If you don't take care, young man," said his friend, "you will find yourself in a scrape with your Madalina."

"What sort of a scrape?"

"As you walk away from Porchester Terrace some fine day, you will have to congratulate yourself on having made a successful overture towards matrimony."

"You don't think I am such a fool as that comes to?"

"Other men as wise as you have done the same sort of thing. Miss Demolines is very clever, and I dare say you find it amusing."

"It is n't so much that she 's clever, and I can hardly say that it is amusing. One gets awfully tired of it, you know. But a fellow must have something to do, and that is as good as anything else."

"I suppose you have not heard that one young man levanted last year to save himself from a breach of promise case?"

"I wonder whether he had any money in India securities?"

"What makes you ask that?"

"Nothing particular."

"Whatever little he had he chose to save, and I think I heard that he went to Canada. His name was Shorter; and they say that, on the eve of his going, Madalina sent him word that she had no objection to the colonies, and that, under the pressing emergency of his expatriation, she was willing to become Mrs. Shorter with more expedition than usually attends fashionable weddings. Shorter, however, escaped, and has never been seen back again."

Eames declared that he did not believe a word of it. Nevertheless, as he walked home he came to the conclusion that Mr. Shorter must have been the handsome gentleman with India securities, to whom "no" had been said once too often.

While sitting with Conway Dalrymple, he had forgotten to say a word about Jael and Sisera.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DR. TEMPEST AT THE PALACE.

INTIMATION had been sent from the palace to Dr. Tempest of Silverbridge of the bishop's intention that a commission should be held by him, as rural dean, with other neighbouring clergymen, as assessors with him, that inquiry might be made on the part of the church into the question of Mr. Crawley's guilt. It must be understood that by this time the opinion had become very general that Mr. Crawley had been guilty, —that he had found the cheque in his house, and that he had, after holding it for many months, succumbed to temptation, and applied it to his own purposes. But various excuses were made for him by those who so believed. In the first place it was felt by all who really knew anything of the man's character, that the very fact of his committing such a crime proved him to be hardly responsible for his actions. He must have known, had not all judgment in such matters been taken from him, that the cheque would certainly be traced back to his hands. No attempt had been made in the disposing of it to dispose of it in such a way that the trace should be obliterated. He had simply given it to a neighbour with a direction to have it cashed, and had written his own name on the back of it. And therefore, though there could be no doubt as

to the theft in the mind of those who supposed that he had found the cheque in his own house, yet the guilt of the theft seemed to be almost annihilated by the folly of the thief. And then his poverty, and his struggles, and the sufferings of his wife, were remembered; and stories were told from mouth to mouth of his industry in his profession, of his great zeal among those brickmakers of Hoggle End, of acts of charity done by him which startled the people of the district into admiration;—how he had worked with his own hands for the sick poor to whom he could not give relief in money, turning a woman's mangle for a couple of hours, and carrying a boy's load along the lanes. Dr. Tempest and others declared that he had derogated from the dignity of his position as an English parish clergyman by such acts; but, nevertheless, the stories of these deeds acted strongly on the minds of both men and women, creating an admiration for Mr. Crawley which was much stronger than the condemnation of his guilt.

Even Mrs. Walker and her daughter, and the Miss Prettymans, had so far given way that they had ceased to asseverate their belief in Mr. Crawley's innocence. They contented themselves now with simply expressing a hope that he would be acquitted by a jury, and that when he should be so acquitted the thing might be allowed to rest. If he had sinned, no doubt he had repented. And then there were serious debates whether he might not have stolen the money without much sin, being mad or half-mad,—touched with madness when he took it; and whether he might not, in spite of such temporary touch of madness, be well fitted for his parish duties. Sorrow had afflicted him grievously;

but that sorrow, though it had incapacitated him for the management of his own affairs, had not rendered him unfit for the ministrations of his parish. Such were the arguments now used in his favour by the women around him; and the men were not keen to contradict them. The wish that he should be acquitted and allowed to remain in his parsonage was very general.

When, therefore, it became known that the bishop had decided to put on foot another investigation, with the view of bringing Mr. Crawley's conduct under ecclesiastical condemnation, almost everybody accused the bishop of persecution. The world of the diocese declared that Mrs. Proudie was at work, and that the bishop himself was no better than a puppet. It was in vain that certain clear-headed men among the clergy, of whom Dr. Tempest himself was one, pointed out that the bishop after all might perhaps be right; —that if Mr. Crawley were guilty, and if he should be found to have been so by a jury, it might be absolutely necessary that an ecclesiastical court should take some cognisance of the crime beyond that taken by the civil law. "The jury," said Dr. Tempest, discussing the case with Mr. Robarts and other clerical neighbours, —"the jury may probably find him guilty and recommend him to mercy. The judge will have heard his character, and will have been made acquainted with his manner of life, and will deal as lightly with the case as the law will allow him. For aught I know he may be imprisoned for a month. I wish it might be for no more than a day,—or an hour. But when he comes out from his month's imprisonment,—how then? Surely it should be a case for ecclesiastical inquiry,

whether a clergyman who has committed a theft should be allowed to go into his pulpit directly he comes out of prison?" But the answer to this was that Mr. Crawley always had been a good clergyman, was a good clergyman at this moment, and would be a good clergyman when he did come out of prison.

But Dr. Tempest, though he had argued in this way, was by no means eager for the commencement of the commission over which he was to be called upon to preside. In spite of such arguments as the above, which came from the man's head when his head was brought to bear upon the matter, there was a thorough desire within his heart to oppose the bishop. He had no strong sympathy with Mr. Crawley, as had others. He would have had Mr. Crawley silenced without regret, presuming Mr. Crawley to have been guilty. But he had a much stronger feeling with regard to the bishop. Had there been any question of silencing the bishop,—could it have been possible to take any steps in that direction,—he would have been very active. It may therefore be understood that in spite of his defence of the bishop's present proceedings as to the commission, he was anxious that the bishop should fail, and anxious to put impediments in the bishop's way, should it appear to him that he could do so with justice. Dr. Tempest was well known among his parishioners to be hard and unsympathetic, some said unfeeling also, and cruel; but it was admitted by those who disliked him the most that he was both practical and just, and that he cared for the welfare of many, though he was rarely touched by the misery of one. Such was the man who was rector of Silverbridge and rural dean in the district, and who was now called

upon by the bishop to assist him in making further inquiry as to this wretched cheque for twenty pounds.

Once at this period Archdeacon Grantly and Dr. Tempest met each other and discussed the question of Mr. Crawley's guilt. Both these men were inimical to the present bishop of the diocese, and both had perhaps respected the old bishop beyond all other men. But they were different in this, that the archdeacon hated Dr. Proudie as a partisan,—whereas Dr. Tempest opposed the bishop on certain principles which he endeavoured to make clear, at any rate to himself. "Wrong!" said the archdeacon, speaking of the bishop's intention of issuing a commission—"of course he is wrong. How could anything right come from him or from her? I should be sorry to have to do his bidding."

"I think you are a little hard upon Bishop Proudie," said Dr. Tempest.

"One cannot be hard upon him," said the archdeacon. "He is so scandalously weak, and she is so radically vicious, that they cannot but be wrong together. The very fact that such a man should be a bishop among us is to me terribly strong evidence of evil days coming."

"You are more impulsive than I am," said Dr. Tempest. "In this case I am sorry for the poor man, who is, I am sure, honest in the main. But I believe that in such a case your father would have done just what the present bishop is doing;—that he could have done nothing else; and as I think that Dr. Proudie is right I shall do all that I can to assist him in the commission."

The bishop's secretary had written to Dr. Tempest,

telling him of the bishop's purpose; and now, in one of the last days of March, the bishop himself wrote to Dr. Tempest, asking him to come over to the palace. The letter was worded most courteously, and expressed very feelingly the great regret which the writer felt at being obliged to take these proceedings against a clergyman in his diocese. Bishop Proudie knew how to write such a letter. By the writing of such letters, and by the making of speeches in the same strain, he had become Bishop of Barchester. Now, in this letter, he begged Dr. Tempest to come over to him, saying how delighted Mrs. Proudie would be to see him at the palace. Then he went on to explain the great difficulty which he felt, and great sorrow also, in dealing with this matter of Mr. Crawley. He looked, therefore, confidently for Dr. Tempest's assistance. Thinking to do the best for Mr. Crawley, and anxious to enable Mr. Crawley to remain in quiet retirement till the trial should be over, he had sent a clergyman over to Hogglestock, who would have relieved Mr. Crawley from the burden of the church-services;—but Mr. Crawley would have none of this relief. Mr. Crawley had been obstinate and overbearing, and had persisted in claiming his right to his own pulpit. Therefore was the bishop obliged to interfere legally, and therefore was he under the necessity of asking Dr. Tempest to assist him. Would Dr. Tempest come over on the Monday, and stay till the Wednesday?

The letter was a good letter, and Dr. Tempest was obliged to do as he was asked. He so far modified the bishop's proposition that he reduced the sojourn at the palace by one night. He wrote to say that he would have the pleasure of dining with the bishop and

Mrs. Proudie on the Monday, but would return home on the Tuesday, as soon as the business in hand would permit him. "I shall get on very well with him," he said to his wife before he started; "but I am afraid of the woman. If she interferes, there will be a row." "Then, my dear," said his wife, "there will be a row, for I am told that she always interferes." On reaching the palace about half-an-hour before dinner-time, Dr. Tempest found that other guests were expected, and on descending to the great yellow drawing-room, which was used only on state occasions, he encountered Mrs. Proudie and two of her daughters arrayed in a full panoply of female armour. She received him with her sweetest smiles, and if there had been any former enmity between Silverbridge and the palace, it was now all forgotten. She regretted greatly that Mrs. Tempest had not accompanied the doctor;—for Mrs. Tempest also had been invited. But Mrs. Tempest was not quite as well as she might have been, the doctor had said, and very rarely slept away from home. And then the bishop came in and greeted his guest with his pleasantest good-humour. It was quite a sorrow to him that Silverbridge was so distant, and that he saw so little of Dr. Tempest; but he hoped that that might be somewhat mended now, and that leisure might be found for social delights;—to all which Dr. Tempest said but little, bowing to the bishop at each separate expression of his lordship's kindness.

There were guests there that evening who did not often sit at the bishop's table. The archdeacon and Mrs. Grantly had been summoned from Plumstead, and had obeyed the summons. Great as was the enmity between the bishop and the archdeacon, it had

never quite taken the form of open palpable hostility. Each, therefore, asked the other to dinner perhaps once every year; and each went to the other, perhaps, once in two years. And Dr. Thorne from Chaldicotes was there, but without his wife, who in these days was up in London. Mrs. Proudie always expressed a warm friendship for Mrs. Thorne, and on this occasion loudly regretted her absence. "You must tell her, Dr. Thorne, how exceedingly much we miss her." Dr. Thorne, who was accustomed to hear his wife speak of her dear friend Mrs. Proudie with almost unmeasured ridicule, promised that he would do so. "We are so sorry the Luftons could n't come to us," said Mrs. Proudie,—not alluding to the dowager, of whom it was well known that no earthly inducement would have sufficed to make her put her foot within Mrs. Proudie's room;—"but one of the children is ill, and she could not leave him." But the Greshams were there from Boxall Hill, and the Thornes from Ullathorne, and, with the exception of a single chaplain, who pretended to carve, Dr. Tempest and the archdeacon were the only clerical guests at the table. From all which Dr. Tempest knew that the bishop was anxious to treat him with special consideration on the present occasion.

The dinner was rather long and ponderous, and occasionally almost dull. The archdeacon talked a good deal, but a bystander with an acute ear might have understood from the tone of his voice that he was not talking as he would have talked among friends. Mrs. Proudie felt this, and understood it, and was angry. She could never find herself in the presence of the archdeacon without becoming angry. Her accurate

ear would always appreciate the defiance of episcopal authority, as now existing in Barchester, which was concealed, or only half concealed, by all the archdeacon's words. But the bishop was not so keen, nor so easily roused to wrath; and though the presence of his enemy did to a certain degree cow him, he strove to fight against the feeling with renewed good-humour.

"You have improved so upon the old days," said the archdeacon, speaking of some small matter with reference to the cathedral, "that one hardly knows the old place."

"I hope we have not fallen off," said the bishop with a smile.

"We have improved, Dr. Grantly," said Mrs. Proudie, with great emphasis on her words. "What you say is true. We have improved."

"Not a doubt about that," said the archdeacon. Then Mrs. Grantly interposed, strove to change the subject, and threw oil upon the waters.

"Talking of improvements," said Mrs. Grantly, "what an excellent row of houses they have built at the bottom of High Street. I wonder who is to live in them?"

"I remember when that was the very worst part of the town," said Dr. Thorne.

"And now they 're asking seventy pounds apiece for houses which did not cost above six hundred each to build," said Mr. Thorne of Ullathorne, with that seeming dislike of modern success which is evinced by most of the elders of the world.

"And who is to live in them?" asked Mrs. Grantly.

"Two of them have been already taken by clergymen," said the bishop, in a tone of triumph.

"Yes," said the archdeacon, "and the houses in the Close which used to be the residences of the prebendaries have been leased out to tallow-chandlers and retired brewers. That comes of the working of the Ecclesiastical Commission."

"And why not?" demanded Mrs. Proudie.

"Why not, indeed, if you like to have tallow-chandlers next door to you?" said the archdeacon. "In the old days, we would sooner have had our brethren near to us."

"There is nothing, Dr. Grantly, so objectionable in a cathedral town as a lot of idle clergymen," said Mrs. Proudie.

"It is beginning to be a question to me," said the archdeacon, "whether there is any use in clergymen at all for the present generation."

"Dr. Grantly, those cannot be your real sentiments," said Mrs. Proudie. Then Mrs. Grantly, working hard in her vocation as a peacemaker, changed the conversation again, and began to talk of the American war. But even that was made matter of discord on church matters,—the archdeacon professing an opinion that the Southerners were Christian gentlemen, and the Northerners infidel snobs; whereas Mrs. Proudie had an idea that the Gospel was preached with genuine zeal in the Northern States. And at each such outbreak the poor bishop would laugh uneasily, and say a word or two to which no one paid much attention. And so the dinner went on, not always in the most pleasant manner for those who preferred continued social good-humour to the occasional excitement of a half-suppressed battle.

Not a word was said about Mr. Crawley. When

Mrs. Proudie and the ladies had left the dining-room, the bishop strove to get up a little lay conversation. He spoke to Mr. Thorne about his game, and to Dr. Thorne about his timber, and even to Mr. Gresham about his hounds. "It is not so very many years, Mr. Gresham," said he, "since the Bishop of Barchester was expected to keep hounds himself," and the bishop laughed at his own joke.

"Your lordship shall have them back at the palace next season," said young Frank Gresham, "if you will promise to do the county justice."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the bishop. "What do you say, Mr. Tozer?" Mr. Tozer was the chaplain on duty.

"I have not the least objection in the world, my lord," said Mr. Tozer, "to act as second whip."

"I 'm afraid you 'll find them an expensive adjunct to the episcopate," said the archdeacon. And then the joke was over; for there had been a rumour, now for some years prevalent in Barchester, that Bishop Proudie was not liberal in his expenditure. As Mr. Thorne said afterwards to his cousin the doctor, the archdeacon might have spared that sneer. "The archdeacon will never spare the man who sits in his father's seat," said the doctor. The pity of it is that men who are so thoroughly different in all their sympathies should ever be brought into contact. "Dear, dear," said the archdeacon, as he stood afterwards on the rug before the drawing-room fire, "how many rubbers of whist I have seen played in this room." "I sincerely hope that you will never see another played here," said Mrs. Proudie. "I 'm quite sure that I shall not," said the archdeacon. For this last sally his wife scolded

him bitterly on their way home. "You know very well," she said, "that the times are changed, and that if you were Bishop of Barchester yourself you would not have whist played in the palace." "I only know," said he, "that when we had the whist we had some true religion along with it, and some good sense and good feeling also." "You cannot be right to sneer at others for doing what you would do yourself," said his wife. Then the archdeacon threw himself sulkily into the corner of his carriage, and nothing more was said between him and his wife about the bishop's dinner-party.

Not a word was spoken that night at the palace about Mr. Crawley; and when that obnoxious guest from Plumstead was gone, Mrs. Proudie resumed her good-humour towards Dr. Tempest. So intent was she on conciliating him that she refrained even from abusing the archdeacon, whom she knew to have been intimate for very many years with the rector of Silverbridge. In her accustomed moods she would have broken forth in loud anger, caring nothing for old friendships; but at present she was thoughtful of the morrow, and desirous that Dr. Tempest should, if possible, meet her in a friendly humour when the great discussion as to Hogglestock should be opened between them. But Dr. Tempest understood her bearing, and as he pulled on his nightcap made certain resolutions of his own as to the morrow's proceedings. "I don't suppose she will dare to interfere," he had said to his wife; "but if she does, I shall certainly tell the bishop that I cannot speak on the subject in her presence."

At breakfast on the following morning there was no one present but the bishop, Mrs. Proudie, and Dr.

Tempest. Very little was said at the meal. Mr. Crawley's name was not mentioned, but there seemed to be a general feeling among them that there was a task hanging over them which prevented any general conversation. The eggs were eaten and the coffee was drunk, but the eggs and the coffee disappeared almost in silence. When these ceremonies had been altogether completed, and it was clearly necessary that something further should be done, the bishop spoke. "Dr. Tempest," he said, "perhaps you will join me in my study at eleven. We can then say a few words to each other about the unfortunate matter on which I have to trouble you." Dr. Tempest said he would be punctual to his appointment, and then the bishop withdrew, muttering something as to the necessity of looking at his letters. Dr. Tempest took a newspaper in his hand, which had been brought in by a servant, but Mrs. Proudie would not allow him to read it. "Dr. Tempest," she said, "this is a matter of most vital importance. I am quite sure that you feel that it is so."

"What matter, madam?" said the doctor.

"This terrible affair of Mr. Crawley's. If something be not done the whole diocese will be disgraced." Then she waited for an answer, but receiving none she was obliged to continue. "Of the poor man's guilt there can, I fear, be no doubt." Then there was another pause, but still the doctor made no answer. "And if he be guilty," said Mrs. Proudie, resolving that she would ask a question that must bring forth some reply, "can any experienced clergyman think that he can be fit to preach from the pulpit of a parish church? I am sure that you must agree with me, Dr. Tempest? Consider the souls of the people!"

"Mrs. Proudie," said he, "I think that we had better not discuss the matter."

"Not discuss it?"

"I think that we had better not do so. If I understand the bishop aright, he wishes that I should take some step in the matter."

"Of course he does."

"And therefore I must decline to make it a matter of common conversation."

"Common conversation, Dr. Tempest! I should be the last person in the world to make it a matter of common conversation. I regard this as by no means a common conversation. God forbid that it should be a common conversation. I am speaking now very seriously with reference to the interests of the church, which I think will be endangered by having among her active servants a man who has been guilty of so base a crime as theft. Think of it, Dr. Tempest. Theft! Stealing money! Appropriating to his own use a cheque for twenty pounds which did not belong to him! And then telling such terrible falsehoods about it! Can anything be worse, anything more scandalous, anything more dangerous? Indeed, Dr. Tempest, I do not regard this as any common conversation." The whole of this speech was not made at once, fluently, or without a break. From stop to stop Mrs. Proudie paused, waiting for her companion's words; but as he would not speak she was obliged to continue. "I am sure that you cannot but agree with me, Dr. Tempest?" she said.

"I am quite sure that I shall not discuss it with you," said the doctor, very brusquely.

"And why not? Are you not here to discuss it?"

"Not with you, Mrs. Proudie. You must excuse

me for saying so, but I am not here to discuss any such matter with you. Were I to do so, I should be guilty of a very great impropriety."

"All these things are in common between me and the bishop," said Mrs. Proudie, with an air that was intended to be dignified, but which nevertheless displayed her rising anger.

"As to that I know nothing, but they cannot be in common between you and me. It grieves me much that I should have to speak to you in such a strain, but my duty allows me no alternative. I think, if you will permit me, I will take a turn round the garden before I keep my appointment with his lordship." And so saying he escaped from the lady without hearing her further remonstrance.

It still wanted nearly an hour to the time named by the bishop, and Dr. Tempest used it in preparing for his withdrawal from the palace as soon as his interview with the bishop should be over. After what had passed he thought that he would be justified in taking his departure without bidding adieu formally to Mrs. Proudie. He would say a word or two, explaining his haste, to the bishop; and then, if he could get out of the house at once, it might be that he would never see Mrs. Proudie again. He was elated by his success in their late battle, but he felt that, having been so completely victorious, it would be foolish in him to risk his laurels in the chance of another encounter. He would say not a word of what had happened to the bishop, and he thought it probable that neither would Mrs. Proudie speak of it,—at any rate till after he was gone. Generals who are beaten out of the field are not quick to talk of their own repulses. He, indeed,

had not beaten Mrs. Proudie out of the field. He had, in fact, himself run away. But he had left his foe silenced; and with such a foe, and in such a contest, that was everything. He put up his portmanteau, therefore, and prepared for his final retreat. Then he rang his bell and desired the servant to show him to the bishop's study. The servant did so, and when he entered the room the first thing he saw was Mrs. Proudie seated in an arm-chair near the window. The bishop was also in the room, sitting with his arms upon the writing-table, and his head upon his hands. It was very evident that Mrs. Proudie did not consider herself to have been beaten, and that she was prepared to fight another battle. "Will you sit down, Dr. Tempest?" she said, motioning him with her hand to a chair opposite to that occupied by the bishop. Dr. Tempest sat down. He felt that at the moment he had nothing else to do, and that he must restrain any remonstrance that he might make till Mr. Crawley's name should be mentioned. He was almost lost in admiration of the woman. He had left her, as he thought, utterly vanquished and prostrated by his determined but uncourteous usage of her; and here she was, present again upon the field of battle as though she had never been even wounded. He could see that there had been words between her and the bishop, and that she had carried a point on which the bishop had been very anxious to have his own way. He could perceive at once that the bishop had begged her to absent herself and was greatly chagrined that he should not have prevailed with her. There she was,—and as Dr. Tempest was resolved that he would neither give advice nor receive instructions respecting Mr.

Crawley in her presence, he could only draw upon his courage and his strategy for the coming warfare. For a few moments no one said a word. The bishop felt that if Dr. Tempest would only begin, the work on hand might be got through, even in his wife's presence. Mrs. Proudie was aware that her husband should begin. If he would do so, and if Dr. Tempest would listen and then reply, she might gradually make her way into the conversation; and if her words were once accepted, then she could say all that she desired to say; then she could play her part and become somebody in the episcopal work. When once she should have been allowed liberty of speech, the enemy would be powerless to stop her. But all this Dr. Tempest understood quite as well as she understood it, and had they waited till night he would not have been the first to mention Mr. Crawley's name.

The bishop sighed aloud. The sigh might be taken as expressing grief over the sin of the erring brother whose conduct they were there to discuss, and was not amiss. But when the sigh with its attendant murmurs had passed away it was necessary that some initiative step should be taken. "Dr. Tempest," said the bishop, "what are we to do about this poor stiff-necked gentleman?" Still Dr. Tempest did not speak. "There is no clergyman in the diocese," continued the bishop, "in whose prudence and wisdom I have more confidence than in yours. And I know, too, that you are by no means disposed to severity where severe measures are not necessary. What ought we to do? If he has been guilty, he should not surely return to his pulpit after the expiration of such punishment as the law of his country may award to him."

Dr. Tempest looked at Mrs. Proudie, thinking that she might perhaps say a word now; but Mrs. Proudie knew her part better and was silent. Angry as she was, she contrived to hold her peace. Let the debate once begin and she would be able to creep into it, and then to lead it,—and so she would hold her own. But she had met a foe as wary as herself. "My lord," said the doctor, "it will perhaps be well that you should communicate your wishes to me in writing. If it be possible for me to comply with them I will do so."

"Yes;—exactly; no doubt;—but I thought that perhaps we might better understand each other if we had a few words of quiet conversation upon the subject. I believe you know the steps that I have——"

But here the bishop was interrupted. Dr. Tempest rose from his chair, and advancing to the table put both his hands upon it. "My lord," he said, "I feel myself compelled to say that which I would very much rather leave unsaid, were it possible. I feel the difficulty, and I may say delicacy, of my position; but I should be untrue to my conscience and to my feeling of what is right in such matters, if I were to take any part in a discussion on this matter in the presence of —a lady."

"Dr. Tempest, what is your objection?" said Mrs. Proudie, rising from her chair, and coming also to the table, so that from thence she might confront her opponent; and as she stood opposite to Dr. Tempest she also put both her hands upon the table.

"My dear, perhaps you will leave us for a few moments," said the bishop. Poor bishop! Poor weak bishop! As the words came from his mouth he knew that they would be spoken in vain, and that, if so, it

would have been better for him to have left them unspoken.

"Why should I be dismissed from your room without a reason?" said Mrs. Proudie. "Cannot Dr. Tempest understand that a wife may share her husband's counsels,—as she must share his troubles? If he cannot, I pity him very much as to his own household."

"Dr. Tempest," said the bishop, "Mrs. Proudie takes the greatest possible interest in everything concerning the diocese."

"I am sure, my lord," said the doctor, "that you will see how unseemly it would be that I should interfere in any way between you and Mrs. Proudie. I certainly will not do so. I can only say again that if you will communicate to me your wishes in writing, I will attend to them,—if it be possible."

"You mean to be stubborn," said Mrs. Proudie, whose prudence was beginning to give way under the great provocation to which her temper was being subjected.

"Yes, madam; if it is to be called stubbornness, I must be stubborn. My lord, Mrs. Proudie spoke to me on this subject in the breakfast-room after you had left it, and I then ventured to explain to her that in accordance with such light as I have on the matter, I could not discuss it in her presence. I greatly grieve that I failed to make myself understood by her,—as, otherwise, this unpleasantness might have been spared."

"I understood you very well, Dr. Tempest, and I think you to be a most unreasonable man. Indeed, I might use a much harsher word."

"You may use any word you please, Mrs. Proudie," said the doctor.

"My dear, I really think you had better leave us for a few minutes," said the bishop.

"No, my lord,—no," said Mrs. Proudie, turning round upon her husband. "Not so. It would be most unbecoming that I should be turned out of a room in this palace by an uncourteous word from a parish clergyman. It would be unseemly. If Dr. Tempest forgets his duty, I will not forget mine. There are other clergymen in the diocese besides Dr. Tempest who can undertake the very easy task of this commission. As for his having been appointed rural dean I don't know how many years ago, it is a matter of no consequence whatever. In such a preliminary inquiry any three clergymen will suffice. It need not be done by the rural dean at all."

"My dear!"

"I will not be turned out of this room by Dr. Tempest;—and that is enough."

"My lord," said the doctor, "you had better write to me as I proposed to you just now."

"His lordship will not write. His lordship will do nothing of the kind," said Mrs. Proudie.

"My dear!" said the bishop, driven in his perplexity beyond all carefulness of reticence. "My dear, I do wish you would n't—I do, indeed. If you would only go away!"

"I will not go away, my lord," said Mrs. Proudie.

"But I will," said Dr. Tempest, feeling true compassion for the unfortunate man whom he saw writhing in agony before him. "It will manifestly be for the best that I should retire. My lord, I wish you good-morning. Mrs. Proudie, good-morning." And so he left the room.

"A most stubborn and a most ungentlemanlike man," said Mrs. Proudie, as soon as the door was closed behind the retreating rural dean. "I do not think that in the whole course of my life I ever met with any one so insubordinate and so ill-mannered. He is worse than the archdeacon." As she uttered these words she paced about the room. The bishop said nothing; and when she herself had been silent for a few minutes she turned upon him. "Bishop," she said, "I hope that you agree with me. I expect that you will agree with me in a matter that is of so much moment to my comfort, and I may say to my position generally in the diocese. Bishop, why do you not speak?"

"You have behaved in such a way that I do not know that I shall ever speak again," said the bishop.

"What is this that you say?"

"I say that I do not know how I shall ever speak again. You have disgraced me."

"Disgraced you! I disgrace you! It is you that disgrace yourself by saying such words."

"Very well. Let it be so. Perhaps you will go away now and leave me to myself. I have got a bad headache, and I can't talk any more. Oh, dear, oh, dear, what will he think of it!"

"And you mean to tell me that I have been wrong!"

"Yes, you have been wrong,—very wrong. Why did n't you go away when I asked you? You are always being wrong. I wish I had never come to Barchester. In any other position I should not have felt it so much. As it is I do not know how I can ever show my face again."

"Not have felt what so much, Mr. Proudie?" said the wife, going back in the excitement of her anger to

the nomenclature of old days. "And this is to be my return for all my care in your behalf! Allow me to tell you, sir, that in any position in which you may be placed I know what is due to you, and that your dignity will never lose anything in my hands. I wish that you were as well able to take care of it yourself." Then she stalked out of the room, and left the poor man alone.

Bishop Proudie sat alone in his study throughout the whole day. Once or twice in the course of the morning his chaplain came to him on some matter of business, and was answered with a smile,—the peculiar softness of which the chaplain did not fail to attribute to the right cause. For it was soon known throughout the household that there had been a quarrel. Could he quite have made up his mind to do so,—could he have resolved that it would be altogether better to quarrel with his wife,—the bishop would have appealed to the chaplain and have asked at any rate for sympathy. But even yet he could not bring himself to confess his misery, and to own himself to another to be the wretch that he was. Then during the long hours of the day he sat thinking of it all. How happy could he be if it were only possible for him to go away, and become even a curate in a parish, without his wife! Would there ever come to him a time of freedom? Would she ever die? He was older than she, and of course he would die first. Would it not be a fine thing if he could die at once, and thus escape from his misery?

What could he do, even supposing himself strong enough to fight the battle? He could not lock her up. He could not even very well lock her out of his room.

She was his wife, and must have the run of his house. He could not altogether debar her from the society of the diocesan clergymen. He had, on this very morning, taken strong measures with her. More than once or twice he had desired her to leave the room. What was there to be done with a woman who would not obey her husband,—who would not even leave him to the performance of his own work? What a blessed thing it would be if a bishop could go away from his home to his work every day like a clerk in a public office,—as a stonemason does! But there was no such escape for him. He could not go away. And how was he to meet her again on this very day?

And then for hours he thought of Dr. Tempest and Mr. Crawley, considering what he had better do to repair the shipwreck of the morning. At last he resolved that he would write to the doctor; and, before he had again seen his wife, he did write his letter and he sent it off. In this letter he made no direct allusion to the occurrence of the morning, but wrote as though there had not been any fixed intention of a personal discussion between them. "I think it will be better that there should be a commission," he said, "and I would suggest that you should have four other clergymen with you. Perhaps you will select two yourself, out of your rural deanery; and, if you do not object, I will name as the other two Mr. Thumble and Mr. Quiverful, who are both resident in the city." As he wrote these two names he felt ashamed of himself, knowing that he had chosen the two men as being special friends of his wife, and feeling that he should have been brave enough to throw aside all considerations of his wife's favour,—especially at this moment,

in which he was putting on his armour to do battle against her. "It is not probable," he continued to say in his letter, "that you will be able to make your report until after the trial of this unfortunate gentleman shall have taken place, and a verdict shall have been given. Should he be acquitted, that, I imagine, should end the matter. There can be no reason why we should attempt to go beyond the verdict of a jury. But should he be found guilty, I think we ought to be ready with such steps as it will be becoming for us to take at the expiration of any sentence which may be pronounced. It will be, at any rate, expedient that in such case the matter should be brought before an ecclesiastical court." He knew well, as he wrote this, that he was proposing something much milder than the course intended by his wife when she had instigated him to take proceedings in the matter; but he did not much regard that now. Though he had been weak enough to name certain clergymen as assessors with the rural dean, because he thought that by doing so he would to a certain degree conciliate his wife,—though he had been so far a coward,—yet he was resolved that he would not sacrifice to her his own judgment and his own conscience in his manner of proceeding. He kept no copy of his letter, so that he might be unable to show her his very words when she should ask to see them. Of course he would tell her what he had done; but in telling her he would keep to himself what he had said as to the result of an acquittal in a civil court. She need not yet be told that he had promised to take such a verdict as sufficing also for an ecclesiastical acquittal. In this spirit his letter was written and sent off before he again saw his wife.

He did not meet her till they came together in the drawing-room before dinner. In explaining the whole truth as to circumstances as they existed at the palace at that moment, it must be acknowledged that Mrs. Proudie herself, great as was her courage, and wide as were the resources which she possessed within herself, was somewhat appalled by the position of affairs. I fear that it may now be too late for me to excite much sympathy in the mind of any reader on behalf of Mrs. Proudie. I shall never be able to make her virtues popular. But she had virtues, and their existence now made her unhappy. She did regard the dignity of her husband, and she felt at the present moment that she had compromised it. She did also regard the welfare of the clergymen around her, thinking of course, in a general way, that certain of them who agreed with her were the clergymen whose welfare should be studied, and that certain of them who disagreed with her were the clergymen whose welfare should be postponed. But now an idea made its way into her bosom that she was not perhaps doing the best for the welfare of the diocese generally. What if it should come to pass that all the clergymen of the diocese should refuse to open their mouths in her presence on ecclesiastical subjects, as Dr. Tempest had done? This special day was not one on which she was well contented with herself, though by no means on that account was her anger mitigated against the offending rural dean.

During dinner she struggled to say a word or two to her husband, as though there had been no quarrel between them. With him the matter had gone so deep that he could not answer her in the same spirit. There were sundry members of the family present,—daugh-

ters, and a son-in-law, and a daughter's friend who was staying with them; but even in the hope of appearing to be serene before them he could not struggle through his deep despondence. He was very silent, and to his wife's words he answered hardly anything. He was courteous and gentle with them all, but he spoke as little as was possible, and during the evening he sat alone, with his head leaning on his hand,—not pretending even to read. He was aware that it was too late to make even an attempt to conceal his misery and his disgrace from his own family.

His wife came to him that night in his dressing-room in a spirit of feminine softness that was very unusual with her. "My dear," said she, "let us forget what occurred this morning. If there has been any anger we are bound as Christians to forget it." She stood over him as she spoke, and put her hand upon his shoulder almost caressingly.

"When a man's heart is broken, he cannot forget it," was his reply. She still stood by him, and still kept her hand upon him; but she could think of no other words of comfort to say. "I will go to bed," he said. "It is the best place for me." Then she left him, and he went to bed.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SOFTNESS OF SIR RAFFLE BUFFLE.

We have seen that John Eames was prepared to start on his journey in search of the Arabins, and have seen him after he had taken farewell of his office and of his master there, previous to his departure; but that matter of his departure had not been arranged altogether with comfort as far as his official interests were concerned. He had been perhaps a little abrupt in his mode of informing Sir Raffle Buffle that there was a pressing cause for his official absence, and Sir Raffle had replied to him that no private pressure could be allowed to interfere with his public duties. "I must go, Sir Raffle, at any rate," Johnny had said; "it is a matter affecting my family, and must not be neglected." "If you intend to go without leave," said Sir Raffle, "I presume you will first put your resignation into the hands of Mr. Kissing." Now, Mr. Kissing was the secretary to the Board. This had been serious undoubtedly. John Eames was not specially anxious to keep his present position as private secretary to Sir Raffle, but he certainly had no desire to give up his profession altogether. He said nothing more to the great man on that occasion, but before he left the office he wrote a private note to the chairman expressing the extreme importance of his business, and begging that

he might have leave of absence. On the next morning he received it back with a very few words written across it. "It can't be done," were the very few words which Sir Raffle Buffle had written across the note from his private secretary. Here was a difficulty which Johnny had not anticipated, and which seemed to be insuperable. Sir Raffle would not have answered him in that strain if he had not been very much in earnest.

"I should send him a medical certificate," said Cradell, his friend of old.

"Nonsense," said Eames.

"I don't see that it 's nonsense at all. They can't get over a medical certificate from a respectable man; and everybody has got something the matter with him of some kind."

"I should go and let him do his worst," said Fisher, who was another clerk. "It would n't be more than putting you down a place or two. As to losing your present berth you don't mind that, and they would never think of dismissing you."

"But I do mind being put down a place or two," said Johnny, who could not forget that were he so put down his friend Fisher would gain the step which he would lose.

"I should give him a barrel of oysters, and talk to him about the Chancellor of the Exchequer," said Fitz-Howard, who had been private secretary to Sir Raffle before Eames, and might therefore be supposed to know the man.

"That might have done very well if I had not asked him and been refused first," said John Eames. "I 'll tell you what I 'll do, I 'll write a long letter on a

sheet of foolscap paper, with a regular margin, so that it must come before the Board, and perhaps that will frighten him."

When he mentioned his difficulty on that evening to Mr. Toogood, the lawyer begged him to give up the journey. "It will only be sending a clerk, and it won't cost so very much after all," said Toogood. But Johnny's pride could not allow him to give way. "I 'm not going to be done about it," said he. "I 'm not going to resign, but I will go even though they may dismiss me. I don't think it will come to that, but if it does it must." His uncle begged of him not to think of such an alternative; but this discussion took place after dinner, and away from the office, and Eames would not submit to bow his neck to authority. "If it comes to that," said he, "a fellow might as well be a slave at once. And what is the use of a fellow having a little money if it does not make him independent? You may be sure of one thing, I shall go; and that on the day fixed."

On the next morning John Eames was very silent when he went into Sir Raffle's room at the office. There was now only this day and another before that fixed for his departure, and it was of course very necessary that matters should be arranged. But he said nothing to Sir Raffle during the morning. The great man himself was condescending and endeavoured to be kind. He knew that his stern refusal had greatly irritated his private secretary, and was anxious to show that, though in the cause of public duty he was obliged to be stern, he was willing to forget his sternness when the necessity for it had passed away. On this morning, therefore, he was very cheery. But to all his

cheery good-humour John Eames would make no response. Late in the afternoon, when most of the men had left the office, Johnny appeared before the chairman for the last time that day with a very long face. He was dressed in black, and had changed his ordinary morning coat for a frock, which gave him an appearance altogether unlike that which was customary to him. And he spoke almost in a whisper, very slowly; and when Sir Raffle joked,—and Sir Raffle often would joke,—he not only did not laugh, but he absolutely sighed. "Is there anything the matter with you, Eames?" asked Sir Raffle.

"I am in great trouble," said John Eames.

"And what is your trouble?"

"It is essential for the honour of one of my family that I should be at Florence by this day week. I cannot make up my mind what I ought to do. I do not wish to lose my position in the public service, to which, as you know, I am warmly attached; but I cannot submit to see the honour of my family sacrificed!"

"Eames," said Sir Raffle, "that must be nonsense; —that must be nonsense. There can be no reason why you should always expect to have your own way in everything."

"Of course if I go without leave I shall be dismissed."

"Of course you will. It is out of the question that a young man should take the bit between his teeth in that way."

"As for taking the bit between his teeth, Sir Raffle, I do not think that any man was ever more obedient, perhaps I should say more submissive, than I have been. But there must be a limit to everything."

"What do you mean by that, Mr. Eames?" said Sir Raffle, turning in anger upon his private secretary. But Johnny disregarded his anger. Johnny, indeed, had made up his mind that Sir Raffle should be very angry. "What do you mean, Mr. Eames, by saying that there must be a limit? I know nothing about limits. One would suppose that you intended to make an accusation against me."

"So I do. I think, Sir Raffle, that you are treating me with great cruelty. I have explained to you that family circumstances——"

"You have explained nothing, Mr. Eames."

"Yes, I have, Sir Raffle. I have explained to you that matters relating to my family, which materially affect the honour of a certain one of its members, demand that I should go at once to Florence. You tell me that if I go I shall be dismissed."

"Of course you must not go without leave. I never heard of such a thing in all my life." And Sir Raffle lifted up his hands towards heaven almost in dismay.

"So I have drawn up a short statement of the circumstances, which I hope may be read at the Board when the question of my dismissal comes before it."

"You mean to go, then?"

"Yes, Sir Raffle; I must go. The honour of a certain branch of my family demands that I should do so. As I have for some time been so especially under you, I thought it would be proper to show you what I have said before I send my letter in, and therefore I have brought it with me. Here it is." And Johnny handed to Sir Raffle an official document of large dimensions.

Sir Raffle began to be uncomfortable. He had acquired a character for tyranny in the public service of

which he was aware, though he thought that he knew well that he had never deserved it. Some official big-wig, —perhaps that Chancellor of the Exchequer of whom he was so fond,—had on one occasion hinted to him that a little softness of usage would be compatible with the prejudices of the age. Softness was impossible to Sir Raffle; but his temper was sufficiently under his control to enable him to encounter the rebuke, and to pull himself up from time to time when he found himself tempted to speak loud and to take things with a high hand. He knew that a clerk should not be dismissed for leaving his office, who could show that his absence had been caused by some matter really affecting the interest of his family; and that were he to drive Eames to go on this occasion without leave, Eames would be simply called in to state what was this matter of moment which had taken him away. Probably he had stated that matter of moment in this very document which Sir Raffle was holding in his hand. But Sir Raffle was not willing to be conquered by the document. If it was necessary that he should give way, he would much prefer to give way,—out of his own good-nature, let us say,—without looking at the document at all. "I must, under the circumstances, decline to read this," said he, "unless it should come before me officially," and he handed back the paper.

"I thought it best to let you see it if you pleased," said John Eames. Then he turned round as though he were going to leave the room; but suddenly he turned back again. "I don't like to leave you, Sir Raffle, without saying good-bye. I do not suppose we shall meet again. Of course you must do your duty, and I do not wish you to think that I have any per-

sonal ill-will against you." So saying, he put out his hand to Sir Raffle as though to take a final farewell. Sir Raffle looked at him in amazement. He was dressed, as has been said, in black, and did not look like the John Eames of every day to whom Sir Raffle was accustomed.

"I don't understand this at all," said Sir Raffle.

"I was afraid that it was only too plain," said John Eames.

"And you must go?"

"Oh, yes;—that 's certain. I have pledged myself to go."

"Of course I don't know anything of this matter that is so important to your family."

"No; you do not," said Johnny.

"Can't you explain it to me, then; so that I may have some reason,—if there is any reason?"

Then John told the story of Mr. Crawley,—a considerable portion of the story; and in his telling of it, I think it probable that he put more weight upon the necessity of his mission to Italy than it could have fairly been made to bear. In the course of the narration Sir Raffle did once contrive to suggest that a lawyer by going to Florence might do the business at any rate as well as John Eames. But Johnny denied this. "No, Sir Raffle, it is impossible; quite impossible," he said. "If you saw the lawyer who is acting in the matter, Mr. Toogood, who is also my uncle, he would tell you the same." Sir Raffle had already heard something of the story of Mr. Crawley, and was now willing to accept the sad tragedy of that case as an excuse for his private secretary's somewhat insubordinate conduct. "Under the circumstances, Eames,

I suppose you must go; but I think you should have told me all about it before."

"I did not like to trouble you, Sir Raffle, with private business."

"It is always best to tell the whole of a story," said Sir Raffle. Johnny being quite content with the upshot of the negotiations accepted this gentle rebuke in silence, and withdrew. On the next day he appeared again at the office in his ordinary costume, and an idea crossed Sir Raffle's brain that he had been partly "done" by the affectation of a costume. "I 'll be even with him some day yet," said Sir Raffle to himself.

"I 've got my leave, boys," said Eames, when he went out into the room in which his three friends sat.

"No!" said Cradell.

"But I have," said Johnny.

"You don't mean that old Huffle Scuffle has given it out of his own head?" said Fisher.

"Indeed he has," said Johnny; "and bade God bless me into the bargain."

"And you did n't give him the oysters?" said Fitz-Howard.

"Not a shell," said Johnny.

"I 'm blessed if you don't beat cock-fighting," said Cradell, lost in admiration at his friend's adroitness.

We know how John passed his evening after that. He went first to see Lily Dale at her uncle's lodgings in Sackville Street, from thence he was taken to the presence of the charming Madalina in Porchester Terrace, and then wound up the night with his friend Conway Dalrymple. When he got to his bed he felt himself to have been triumphant, but in spite of his triumph he was ashamed of himself. Why had he left

Lily to go to Madalina? As he thought of this he quoted to himself against himself Hamlet's often-quoted appeal to the two portraits. How could he not despise himself in that he could find any pleasure with Madalina, having a Lily Dale to fill his thoughts? "But she is not fair for me," he said to himself,—thinking thus to comfort himself. But he did not comfort himself.

On the next morning early his uncle, Mr. Toogood, met him at the Dover Railway Station. "Upon my word, Johnny, you 're a clever fellow," said he. "I never thought that you 'd make it all right with Sir Raffle."

"As right as a trivet, uncle. There are some people, if you can only get to learn the length of their feet, you can always fit them with shoes afterwards."

"You 'll go on direct to Florence, Johnny?"

"Yes; I think so. From what we have heard, Mrs. Arabin must be either there or at Venice, and I don't suppose I could learn from any one at Paris at which town she is staying at this moment."

"Her address is Florence;—poste restante, Florence. You will be sure to find out at any of the hotels where she is staying, or where she has been staying."

"But when I have found her, I don't suppose she can tell me anything," said Johnny.

"Who can tell? She may or she may not. My belief is that the money was her present altogether, and not his. It seems that they don't mix their moneys. He has always had some scruple about it because of her son by a former marriage, and they always have different accounts at their banker's. I found that out when I was at Barchester."

"But Crawley was his friend."

"Yes, Crawley was his friend; but I don't know that fifty-pound notes have always been so very plentiful with him. Deans' incomes ain't what they were, you know."

"I don't know anything about that," said Johnny.

"Well; they are not. And he has nothing of his own, as far as I can learn. It would be just the thing for her to do,—to give the money to his friend. At any rate she will tell you whether it was so or not."

"And then I will go on to Jerusalem after him."

"Should you find it necessary. He will probably be on his way back, and she will know where you can hit him on the road. You must make him understand that it is essential that he should be here some little time before the trial. You can understand, Johnny," —and, as he spoke, Mr. Toogood lowered his voice to a whisper, though they were walking together on the platform of the railway station, and could not possibly have been overheard by any one. "You can understand that it may be necessary to prove that he is not exactly compos mentis, and if so it will be essential that he should have some influential friend near him. Otherwise that bishop will trample him into dust." If Mr. Toogood could have seen the bishop at this time and have read the troubles of the poor man's heart, he would hardly have spoken of him as being so terrible a tyrant.

"I understand all that," said Johnny.

"So that, in fact, I shall expect to see you both together," said Toogood.

"I hope the dean is a good fellow."

"They tell me he is a very good fellow."

"I never did see much of bishops or deans as yet," said Johnny, "and I should feel rather awe-struck travelling with one."

"I should fancy that a dean is very much like anybody else."

"But the man's hat would cow me."

"I dare say you 'll find him walking about Jerusalem with a wide-awake on, and a big stick in his hand, probably smoking a cigar. Deans contrive to get out of their armour sometimes, as the knights of old used to do. Bishops, I fancy, find it more difficult. Well; —good-bye, old fellow. I 'm very much obliged to you for going,—I am indeed. I don't doubt but what we shall pull through somehow."

Then Mr. Toogood went home to breakfast, and from his own house he proceeded to his office. When he had been there an hour or two, there came to him a messenger from the Income-tax Office, with an official note addressed to himself by Sir Raffle Buffle,—a note which looked to be very official. Sir Raffle Buffle presented his compliments to Mr. Toogood, and could Mr. Toogood favour Sir. R. B. with the present address of Mr. John Eames? "Old fox," said Mr. Toogood;—"but then such a stupid old fox! As if it was likely that I should have peached on Johnny if anything was wrong." So Mr. Toogood sent his compliments to Sir Raffle Buffle, and begged to inform Sir R. B. that Mr. John Eames was away on very particular family business, which would take him in the first instance to Florence;—but that from Florence he would probably have to go on to Jerusalem without the loss of an hour. "Stupid old fool!" said Mr. Toogood, as he sent off his reply by the messenger.

CHAPTER XX.

NEAR THE CLOSE.

I WONDER whether any one will read these pages who has never known anything of the bitterness of a family quarrel? If so, I shall have a reader very fortunate, or else very cold-blooded. It would be wrong to say that love produces quarrels; but love does produce those intimate relations of which quarrelling is too often one of the consequences,—one of the consequences which frequently seem to be so natural, and sometimes seem to be unavoidable. One brother rebukes the other,—and what brothers ever lived together between whom there was no such rebuking?—then some warm word is misunderstood and hotter words follow and there is a quarrel. The husband tyrannises, knowing that it is his duty to direct, and the wife disobeys, or only partially obeys, thinking that a little independence will become her,—and so there is a quarrel. The father, anxious only for his son's good, looks into that son's future with other eyes than those of his son himself,—and so there is a quarrel. They come very easily, these quarrels, but the quittance from them is sometimes terribly difficult. Much of thought is necessary before the angry man can remember that he too in part may have been wrong; and any attempt at such thinking is almost beyond the power of him who

is carefully nursing his wrath, lest it cool! But the nursing of such quarrelling kills all happiness. The very man who is nursing his wrath, lest it cool,—his wrath against one whom he loves perhaps the best of all whom it has been given him to love,—is himself wretched as long as it lasts. His anger poisons every pleasure of his life. He is sullen at his meals, and cannot understand his book as he turns its pages. His work, let it be what it may, is ill done. He is full of his quarrel,—nursing it. He is telling himself how much he has loved that wicked one, how many have been his sacrifices for that wicked one, and that now that wicked one is repaying him simply with wickedness! And yet the wicked one is at that very moment dearer to him than ever. If that wicked one could only be forgiven how sweet would the world be again! And yet he nurses his wrath.

So it was in these days with Archdeacon Grantly. He was very angry with his son. It is hardly too much to say that in every moment of his life, whether waking or sleeping, he was thinking of the injury that his son was doing him. He had almost come to forget the fact that his anger had first been roused by the feeling that his son was about to do himself an injury,—to cut his own throat. Various other considerations had now added themselves to that, and filled not only his mind but his daily conversation with his wife. How terrible would be the disgrace to Lord Hartletop, how incurable the injury to Griselda, the marchioness, should the brother-in-law of the one, and the brother of the other, marry the daughter of a convicted thief! "Of himself he would say nothing." So he declared constantly, though of himself he did say a great deal

"Of himself he would say nothing, though of course such a marriage would ruin him in the county." "My dear," said his wife, "that is nonsense. That really is nonsense. I feel sure there is not a single person in the county who would think of the marriage in such a light." Then the archdeacon would have quarrelled with his wife too, had she not been too wise to admit such a quarrel. Mrs. Grantly was very wise and knew that it took two persons to make a quarrel. He told her over and over again that she was in league with her son,—that she was encouraging her son to marry Grace Crawley. "I believe that in your heart you wish it," he once said to her. "No, my dear, I do not wish it. I do not think it a becoming marriage. But if he does marry her, I should wish to receive his wife in my house, and certainly should not quarrel with him." "I will never receive her," the archdeacon had replied; "and as for him, I can only say that in such case I will make no provision for his family."

It will be remembered that the archdeacon had on a former occasion instructed his wife to write to their son and tell him of his father's determination. Mrs. Grantly had so manœuvred that a little time had been gained, and that those instructions had not been insisted upon in all their bitterness. Since that time Major Grantly had renewed his assurance that he would marry Grace Crawley if Grace Crawley would accept him,—writing on this occasion direct to his father,—and had asked his father whether, in such case, he was to look forward to be disinherited. "It is essential that I should know," the major had said, "because in such case I must take immediate measures for leaving this place." His father had sent him back

his letter, writing a few words at the bottom of it. "If you do as you propose above, you must expect nothing from me." The words were written in large round-hand writing, very hurriedly, and the son when he received them perfectly understood the mood of his father's mind when he wrote them.

Then there came tidings, addressed on this occasion to Mrs. Grantly, that Cosby Lodge was to be given up. Lady-day had come, and the notice, necessarily to be given at that period, was so given. "I know this will grieve you," Major Grantly had said, "but my father has driven me to it." This, in itself, was a cause of great sorrow, both to the archdeacon and to Mrs. Grantly, as there were circumstances connected with Cosby Lodge which made them think that it was a very desirable residence for their son. "I shall sell everything about the place and go abroad at once," he said in a subsequent letter. "My present idea is that I shall settle myself at Pau, as my income will suffice for me to live there, and education for Edith will be cheap. At any rate I will not continue in England. I could never be happy here in circumstances so altered. Of course I should not have left my profession, unless I had understood from my father that the income arising from it would not be necessary to me. I do not, however, mean to complain, but simply tell you that I shall go." There were many letters between the mother and son in those days. "I shall stay till after the trial," he said. "If she will then go with me, well and good; but whether she will or not, I shall not remain here." All this seemed to Mrs. Grantly to be peculiarly unfortunate, for, had he not resolved to go, things might even yet have righted

themselves. From what she could now understand of the character of Miss Crawley, whom she did not know personally, she thought it probable that Grace, in the event of her father being found guilty by the jury, would absolutely and persistently refuse the offer made to her. She would be too good, as Mrs. Grantly put it to herself, to bring misery and disgrace into another family. But should Mr. Crawley be acquitted, and should the marriage then take place, the archdeacon himself might probably be got to forgive it. In either case there would be no necessity for breaking up the house at Cosby Lodge. But her dear son Henry, her best beloved, was obstinate and stiff-necked, and would take no advice. "He is even worse than his father," she said, in her short-lived anger, to her own father, to whom alone at this time she could unburden her griefs, seeking consolation and encouragement.

It was her habit to go over to the deanery at any rate twice a week at this time, and on the occasion of one of the visits so made, she expressed very strongly her distress at the family quarrel which had come among them. The old man took his grandson's part through and through. "I do not at all see why he should not marry the young lady if he likes her. As for money, there ought to be enough without his having to look for a wife with a fortune."

"It is not a question of money, papa."

"And as to rank," continued Mr. Harding, "Henry will not at any rate be going lower than his father did when he married you;—not so low, indeed, for at that time I was only a minor canon, and Mr. Crawley is in possession of a benefice."

"Papa, all that is nonsense. It is, indeed."

"Very likely, my dear."

"It is not because Mr. Crawley is only perpetual curate of Hogglestock, that the archdeacon objects to the marriage. It has nothing to do with that at all. At the present moment he is in disgrace."

"Under a cloud, my dear. Let us pray that it may be only a passing cloud."

"All the world thinks that he is guilty. And then he is such a man;—so singular, so unlike anybody else! You know, papa, that I don't think very much of money, merely as money."

"I hope not, my dear. Money is worth thinking of, but it is not worth very much thought."

"But it does give advantages, and the absence of such advantages must be very much felt in the education of a girl. You would hardly wish Henry to marry a young woman who, from want of money, had not been brought up among ladies. It is not Miss Crawley's fault, but such has been her lot. We cannot ignore these deficiencies, papa."

"Certainly not, my dear."

"You would not, for instance, wish that Henry should marry a kitchen-maid."

"But is Miss Crawley a kitchen-maid, Susan?"

"I don't quite say that."

"I am told that she has been educated infinitely better than most of the young ladies in the neighbourhood," said Mr. Harding.

"I believe that her father has taught her Greek; and I suppose she has learned something of French at that school at Silverbridge."

"Then the kitchen-maid theory is sufficiently disposed of," said Mr. Harding, with mild triumph.

"You know what I mean, papa. But the fact is, that it is impossible to deal with men. They will never be reasonable. A marriage such as this would be injurious to Henry; but it will not be ruinous; and as to disinheriting him for it, that would be downright wicked."

"I think so," said Mr. Harding.

"But the archdeacon will look at it as though it would destroy Henry and Edith altogether, while you speak of it as though it were the best thing in the world."

"If the young people love each other, I think it would be the best thing in the world," said Mr. Harding.

"But, papa, you cannot but think that his father's wish should go for something," said Mrs. Grantly, who, desirous as she was on the one side to support her son, could not bear that her husband should, on the other side, be declared to be altogether in the wrong.

"I do not know, my dear," said Mr. Harding; "but I do think that if the two young people are fond of each other, and if there is anything for them to live upon, it cannot be right to keep them apart. You know, my dear, she is the daughter of a gentleman." Mrs. Grantly upon this left her father almost brusquely, without speaking another word on the subject; for, though she was opposed to the vehement anger of her husband, she could not endure the proposition now made by her father.

Mr. Harding was at this time living all alone in the deanery. For some time the deanery had been his home, and as his youngest daughter was the dean's wife, there could be no more comfortable resting-place

for the evening of his life. During the last month or two the days had gone tediously with him; for he had had the large house all to himself, and he was a man who did not love solitude. It is hard to conceive that the old, whose thoughts have been all thought out, should ever love to live alone. Solitude is surely for the young, who have time before them for the execution of schemes, and who can, therefore, take delight in thinking. In these days the poor old man would wander about the rooms, shambling from one chamber to another, and would feel ashamed when the servants met him ever on the move. He would make little apologies for his uneasiness, which they would accept graciously, understanding, after a fashion, why it was that he was uneasy. "He ain't got nothing to do," said the housemaid to the cook, "and as for reading, they say that some of the young ones can read all day sometimes, and all night too; but, bless you, when you 're nigh eighty, reading don't go for much." The housemaid was right as to Mr. Harding's reading. He was not one who had read so much in his earlier days as to enable him to make reading go far with him now that he was near eighty. So he wandered about the room, and sat here for a few minutes, and there for a few minutes, and though he did not sleep much, he made the hours of the night as many as was possible. Every morning he shambled across from the deanery to the cathedral, and attended the morning service, sitting in the stall which he had occupied for fifty years. The distance was very short, not exceeding, indeed, a hundred yards from a side-door in the deanery to another side-door into the cathedral; but short as it was there had come to be a question whether he should

be allowed to go alone. It had been feared that he might fall on his passage and hurt himself; for there was a step here, and a step there, and the light was not very good in the purlieus of the old cathedral. A word or two had been said once, and the offer of an arm to help him had been made; but he had rejected the proffered assistance,—softly, indeed, but still firmly, —and every day he tottered off by himself, hardly lifting his feet as he went, and aiding himself on his journey by a hand upon the wall when he thought that nobody was looking at him. But many did see him, and they who knew him,—ladies generally of the city, —would offer him a hand. Nobody was milder in his dislikings than Mr. Harding; but there were ladies in Barchester upon whose arm he would always decline to lean, bowing courteously as he did so, and saying a word or two of constrained civility. There were others whom he would allow to accompany him home to the door of the deanery, with whom he delighted to linger and chat if the morning was warm, and to whom he would tell little stories of his own doings in the cathedral services in the old days, when Bishop Grantly had ruled in the diocese. Never a word did he say against Bishop Proudie, or against Bishop Proudie's wife; but the many words which he did say in praise of Bishop Grantly,—who, by his showing, was surely one of the best of churchmen who ever walked through this vale of sorrow,—were as eloquent in dispraise of the existing prelate as could have been any more clearly-pointed phrases. This daily visit to the cathedral, where he would say his prayers as he had said them for so many years, and listen to the organ, of which he knew all the power and every blemish as though he himself had

made the stops and fixed the pipes, was the chief occupation of his life. It was a pity that it could not have been made to cover a larger portion of the day.

It was sometimes sad enough to watch him as he sat alone. He would have a book near him, and for a while would keep it in his hands. It would generally be some volume of good old standard theology with which he had been, or supposed himself to have been, conversant from his youth. But the book would soon be laid aside, and gradually he would move himself away from it, and he would stand about in the room, looking now out of a window from which he would fancy that he could not be seen, or gazing up at some print which he had known for years; and then he would sit down for a while in one chair, and for a while in another, while his mind was wandering back into old days, thinking of old troubles and remembering his old joys. And he had a habit, when he was sure that he was not watched, of creeping up to a great black wooden case, which always stood in one corner of the sitting-room which he occupied in the deanery. Mr. Harding, when he was younger, had been a performer on the violoncello, and in this case there was still the instrument from which he had been wont to extract the sounds which he had so dearly loved. Now in these latter days he never made any attempt to play. Soon after he had come to the deanery there had fallen upon him an illness, and after that he had never again asked for his bow. They who were around him,—his daughter chiefly and her husband,—had given the matter much thought, arguing with themselves whether or no it would be better to invite him to resume the task he had so loved; for of all the works of his life

this playing on the violoncello had been the sweetest to him; but even before that illness his hand had greatly failed him, and the dean and Mrs. Arabin had agreed that it would be better to let the matter pass without a word. He had never asked to be allowed to play. He had expressed no regrets. When he himself would propose that his daughter should "give them a little music,"—and he would make such a proposition on every evening that was suitable,—he would never say a word of those former performances at which he himself had taken a part. But it had become known to Mrs. Arabin, through the servants, that he had once dragged the instrument forth from its case when he had thought the house to be nearly deserted; and a wail of sounds had been heard, very low, very short-lived, recurring now and again at fitful intervals. He had at those times attempted to play, as though with a muffled bow,—so that none should know of his vanity and folly. Then there had been further consultations at the deanery, and it had been again agreed that it would be best to say nothing to him of his music.

In these latter days of which I am now speaking he would never draw the instrument out of its case. Indeed, he was aware that it was too heavy for him to handle without assistance. But he would open the prison door, and gaze upon the thing that he loved, and he would pass his fingers among the broad strings, and ever and anon he would produce from one of them a low, melancholy, almost unearthly sound. And then he would pause, never daring to produce two such notes in succession,—one close upon the other. And these last sad moans of the old fiddle were now known through the household. They were the ghosts

of the melody of days long past. He imagined that his visits to the box were unsuspected,—that none knew of the folly of his old fingers which could not keep themselves from touching the wires; but the voice of the violoncello had been recognised by the servants and by his daughter, and when that low wail was heard through the house,—like the last dying note of a dirge,—they would all know that Mr. Harding was visiting his ancient friend.

When the dean and Mrs. Arabin had first talked of going abroad for a long visit, it had been understood that Mr. Harding should pass the period of their absence with his other daughter at Plumstead; but when the time came he begged of Mrs. Arabin to be allowed to remain in his old rooms. "Of course I shall go backwards and forwards," he had said. "There is nothing I like so much as a change now and then." The result had been that he had gone once to Plumstead during the dean's absence. When he had thus remonstrated, begging to be allowed to remain in Barchester, Mrs. Arabin had declared her intention of giving up her tour. In telling her father of this she had not said that her altered purpose had arisen from her disinclination to leave him alone;—but he had perceived that it was so, and had then consented to be taken over to Plumstead. There was nothing, he said, which he would like so much as going over to Plumstead for four or five months. It had ended in his having his own way altogether. The Arabins had gone upon their tour, and he was left in possession of the deanery. "I should not like to die out of Barchester," he said to himself in excuse to himself for his disinclination to sojourn long under the archdeacon's

roof. But, in truth, the archdeacon, who loved him well and who, after a fashion, had always been good to him,—who had always spoken of the connection which had bound the two families together as the great blessing of his life,—was too rough in his greetings for the old man. Mr. Harding had ever mixed something of fear with his warm affection for his elder son-in-law, and now in these closing hours of his life he could not avoid a certain amount of shrinking from that loud voice,—a certain inaptitude to be quite at ease in that commanding presence. The dean, his second son-in-law, had been a modern friend in comparison with the archdeacon; but the dean was more gentle with him; and then the dean's wife had ever been the dearest to him of human beings. It may be a doubt whether one of the dean's children was not now almost more dear, and whether in these days he did not have more free communication with that little girl than with any other human being. Her name was Susan, but he had always called her Posy, having himself invented for her that soubriquet. When it had been proposed to him to pass the winter and spring at Plumstead, the suggestion had been made alluring by a promise that Posy also should be taken to Mrs. Grantly's house. But he, as we have seen, had remained at the deanery, and Posy had remained with him.

Posy was now five years old, and could talk well, and had her own ideas of things. Posy's eyes,—hers, and no others besides her own,—were allowed to see the inhabitant of the big black case; and now that the deanery was so nearly deserted, Posy's fingers had touched the strings, and had produced an infantine moan. "Grandpa, let me do it again." Twang! It

was not, however, in truth, a twang, but a sound as of a prolonged dull, almost deadly, hum-m-m-m-m! On this occasion the moan was not entirely infantine,—Posy's fingers having been something too strong,—and the case was closed and locked, and grandpapa shook his head.

"But Mrs. Baxter won't be angry," said Posy. Mrs. Baxter was the housekeeper in the deanery, and had Mr. Harding under her especial charge.

"No, my darling; Mrs. Baxter will not be angry, but we must n't disturb the house."

"No," said Posy, with much of important awe in her tone; "we must n't disturb the house; must we, grandpapa?" And so she gave in her adhesion to the closing of the case. But Posy could play cat's-cradle, and as cat's-cradle did not disturb the house at all, there was a good deal of cat's-cradle played in these days. Posy's fingers were so soft and pretty, so small and deft, that the dear old man delighted in taking the strings from them, and in having them taken from his own by those tender little digits.

On the afternoon after the conversation respecting Grace Crawley which is recorded in the early part of this chapter, a messenger from Barchester went over to Plumstead, and a part of his mission consisted of a note from Mrs. Baxter to Mrs. Grantly, beginning, "Honoured Madam," and informing Mrs. Grantly, among other things, that her "respected papa," as Mrs. Baxter called him, was not quite so well as usual; not that Mrs. Baxter thought there was much the matter. Mr. Harding had been to the cathedral service, as was usual with him, but had come home leaning on a lady's arm who had thought it well to stay with him

at the door till it had been opened for him. After that "Miss Posy" had found him asleep, and had been unable,—or if not unable, unwilling, to wake him. "Miss Posy" had come down to Mrs. Baxter somewhat in a fright, and hence this letter had been written. Mrs. Baxter thought that there was nothing to "fright" Mrs. Grantly, and she was n't sure that she should have written at all only that Dick was bound to go over to Plumstead with the wool; but as Dick was going, Mrs. Baxter thought it proper to send her duty, and to say that to her humble way of thinking perhaps it might be best that Mr. Harding should n't go alone to the cathedral every morning. "If the dear reverend gentleman was to get a tumble, ma'am," said the letter, "it would be awkward." Then Mrs. Grantly remembered that she had left her father almost without a greeting on the previous day, and she resolved that she would go over very early on the following morning,—so early that she would be at the deanery before her father should have gone to the cathedral.

"He ought to have come over here, and not stayed there by himself," said the archdeacon, when his wife told him of her intention.

"It is too late to think of that now, my dear; and one can understand, I think, that he should not like leaving the cathedral as long as he can attend it. The truth is he does not like being out of Barchester."

"He would be much better here," said the archdeacon. "Of course you can have the carriage and go over. We can breakfast at eight; and if you can bring him back with you, do. I should tell him that he ought to come." Mrs. Grantly made no answer to this, knowing very well that she could not bring her-

self to go beyond the gentlest persuasion with her father, and on the next morning she was at the deanery by ten o'clock. Half-past ten was the hour at which the service began. Mrs. Baxter contrived to meet her before she saw her father, and begged her not to let it be known that any special tidings of Mr. Harding's failing strength had been sent from the deanery to Plumstead. "And how is my father?" asked Mrs. Grantly. "Well, then, ma'am," said Baxter, "in one sense he 's finely. He took a morsel of early lamb to his dinner yesterday, and relished it ever so well,—only he gave Miss Posy the best part of it. And then he sat with Miss Posy quite happy for an hour or so. And then he slept in his chair; and you know, ma'am, we never wakes him. And after that old Skulpit toddled up from the hospital,"—this was Hiram's Hospital, of which establishment, in the city of Barchester, Mr. Harding had once been the warden and kind master, as has been told in the former chronicles,—"and your papa has said, ma'am, you know, that he is always to see any of the old men when they come up. And Skulpit is sly, and no better than he should be, and got money from your father, ma'am, I know. And then he had just a drop of tea, and after that I took him his glass of port wine with my own hands. And it touched me, ma'am, so it did, when he said, 'Oh, Mrs. Baxter, how good you are; you know well what it is I like.' And then he went to bed. I listened hard,—not from idle cur'osity, ma'am, as you, who know me, will believe, but just because it 's becoming to know what he 's about, as there might be an accident, you know, ma'am." "You are very good, Mrs. Baxter, very good." "Thank ye, ma'am, for say-

ing so. And so I listened hard; but he did n't go to his music, poor gentleman; and I think he had a quiet night. He does n't sleep much at nights, poor gentleman, but he 's very quiet; leastwise he was last night." This was the bulletin which Mrs. Baxter gave to Mrs. Grantly on that morning before Mrs. Grantly saw her father.

She found him preparing himself for his visit to the cathedral. Some year or two,—but no more,—before the date of which we are speaking, he had still taken some small part in the service; and while he had done so he had of course worn his surplice. Living so close to the cathedral,—so close that he could almost walk out of the house into the transept,—he had kept his surplice in his own room, and had gone down in his vestment. It had been a bitter day to him when he had first found himself constrained to abandon the white garment which he loved. He had encountered some failure in the performance of the slight clerical task allotted to him, and the dean had tenderly advised him to desist. He did not utter one word of remonstrance. "It will perhaps be better," the dean had said. "Yes,—it will be better," Mr. Harding had replied. "Few have had accorded to them the high privilege of serving their Master in His house for so many years,—though few more humbly, or with lower gifts." But on the following morning, and for nearly a week afterwards, he had been unable to face the minor canon and the vergers, and the old women who knew him so well, in his ordinary black garments. At last he went down with the dean, and occupied a stall close to the dean's seat,—far away from that in which he had sat for so many years,—and in this seat he had said his prayers ever since that day. And now his

surplices were washed and ironed and folded and put away; but there were moments in which he would stealthily visit them, as he also stealthily visited his friend in the black wooden case. This was very melancholy, and the sadness of it was felt by all those who lived with him; but he never alluded himself to any of those bereavements which age brought upon him. Whatever might be his regrets, he kept them ever within his own breast.

Posy was with him when Mrs. Grantly went up into his room, holding for him his hat and stick while he was engaged in brushing a suspicion of dust from his black gaiters. "Grandpapa, here is aunt Susan," said Posy. The old man looked up with something,—with some slightest sign of that habitual fear which was always aroused within his bosom by visitations from Plumstead. Had Mrs. Arabin thoroughly understood the difference in her father's feelings towards herself and towards her sister, I think she would hardly have gone forth upon any tour while he remained with her in the deanery. It is very hard sometimes to know how intensely we are loved, and of what value our presence is to those who love us! Mrs. Grantly saw the look,—did not analyse it, did not quite understand it,—but felt, as she had so often felt before, that it was not altogether laden with welcome. But all this had nothing to do with the duty on which she had come; nor did it, in the slightest degree, militate against her own affection. "Papa," she said, kissing him, "you are surprised to see me so early?"

"Well, my dear, yes;—but very glad all the same. I hope everybody is well at Plumstead?"

"Everybody, thank you, papa."

"That is well. Posy and I are getting ready for church. Are we not, Posy?"

"Grandpapa is getting ready. Mrs. Baxter won't let me go."

"No, my dear, no;—not yet, Posy. When Posy is a great girl she can go to cathedral every day. Only then, perhaps, Posy won't want to go."

"I thought that, perhaps, papa, you would sit with me a little while this morning, instead of going to morning prayers."

"Certainly, my dear,—certainly. Only I do not like not going;—for who can say how often I may be able to go again? There is so little left, Susan,—so very little left."

After that she had not the heart to ask him to stay, and therefore she went with him. As they passed down the stairs and out of the doors she was astonished to find how weak were his footsteps,—how powerless he was against the slightest misadventure. On this very day he would have tripped at the upward step at the cathedral door had she not been with him. "Oh, papa," she said, "indeed, indeed, you should not come here alone." Then he apologised for his little stumble with many words and much shame, assuring her that anybody might trip on an occasion. It was purely an accident; and though it was a comfort to him to have had her arm, he was sure that he should have recovered himself even had he been alone. He always, he said, kept quite close to the wall, so that there might be no mistake,—no possibility of an accident. All this he said volubly, but with confused words, in the covered stone passage leading into the transept. And, as he thus spoke, Mrs. Grantly made up her mind that

her father should never again go to the cathedral alone. He never did go again to the cathedral,—alone.

When they returned to the deanery, Mr. Harding was fluttered, weary, and unwell. When his daughter left him for a few minutes he told Mrs. Baxter, in confidence, the story of his accident, and his great grief that his daughter should have seen it. "Laws amercy, sir, it was a blessing she was with you," said Mrs. Baxter; "it was, indeed, Mr. Harding." Then Mr. Harding had been angry, and spoke almost crossly to Mrs. Baxter; but, before she left the room, he found an opportunity of begging her pardon,—not in a set speech to that effect, but by a little word of gentle kindness, which she had understood perfectly. "Papa," said Mrs. Grantly to him as soon as she had succeeded in getting both Posy and Mrs. Baxter out of the room,—against the doing of which, Mr. Harding had manœuvred with all his little impotent skill,—"Papa, you must promise me that you will not go to the cathedral again alone, till Eleanor comes home." When he heard the sentence he looked at her with blank misery in his eyes. He made no attempt at remonstrance. He begged for no respite. The word had gone forth, and he knew that it must be obeyed. Though he would have hidden the signs of his weakness had he been able, he would not condescend to plead that he was strong. "If you think it wrong, my dear, I will not go alone," he said. "Papa, I do; indeed, I do. Dear papa, I would not hurt you by saying it if I did not know that I am right." He was sitting with his hands upon the table, and, as she spoke to him, she put her hand upon his, caressing it. "My dear," he said, "you are always right."

She then left him again for a while, having some business out in the city, and he was alone in his room for an hour. What was there left to him now in the world? Old as he was, and in some things almost childish, nevertheless, he thought of this keenly, and some half-realised remembrance of "the lean and slippered pantaloon" flitted across his mind, causing him a pang. What was there left to him now in the world? Posy and cat's-cradle! Then, in the midst of his regrets, as he sat with his back bent in his old easy-chair, with one arm over the shoulder of the chair, and the other hanging loose by his side, on a sudden there came across his face a smile as sweet as ever brightened the face of man or woman. He had been able to tell himself that he had no ground for complaint,—great ground rather for rejoicing and gratitude. Had not the world and all in it been good to him; had he not children who loved him, who had done him honour, who had been to him always a crown of glory, never a mark for reproach; had not his lines fallen to him in very pleasant places; was it not his happy fate to go and leave it all amidst the good words and kind, loving cares of devoted friends? Whose latter days had ever been more blessed than his? And for the future——? It was as he thought of this that that smile came across his face,—as though it were already the face of an angel. And then he muttered to himself a word or two. "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace. Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace."

When Mrs. Grantly returned she found him in jocund spirits. And yet she perceived that he was so weak that when he left his chair he could barely get across

the room without assistance. Mrs. Baxter, indeed, had not sent to her too soon, and it was well that the prohibition had come in time to prevent some terrible accident. "Papa," she said, "I think you had better go with me to Plumstead. The carriage is here, and I can take you home so comfortably." But he would not allow himself to be taken on this occasion to Plumstead. He smiled and thanked her, and put his hand into hers, and repeated his promise that he would not leave the house on any occasion without assistance, and declared himself specially thankful to her for coming to him on that special morning;—but he would not be taken to Plumstead. "When the summer comes," he said, "then, if you will have me for a few days!"

He meant no deceit, and yet he had told himself within the last hour that he should never see another summer. He could not tell even his daughter that after such a life as this, after more than fifty years spent in the ministrations of his darling cathedral, it specially behoved him to die,—as he had lived,—at Barchester. He could not say this to his eldest daughter; but had his Eleanor been at home, he could have said it to her. He thought he might yet live to see his Eleanor once again. If this could be given to him he would ask for nothing more.

On the afternoon of the next day, Mrs. Baxter wrote another letter, in which she told Mrs. Grantly that her father had declared, at his usual hour of rising that morning, that as he was not going to the cathedral he would, he thought, lie in bed a little longer. And then he had lain in bed the whole day. "And, perhaps, honoured madam, looking at all things, it 's best as he should," said Mrs. Baxter.

CHAPTER XXI.

LADY LUFTON'S PROPOSITION.

It was now known throughout Barchester that a commission was to be held by the bishop's orders, at which inquiry would be made,—that is, ecclesiastical inquiry,—as to the guilt imputed to Mr. Crawley in the matter of Mr. Soames's cheque. Sundry rumours had gone abroad as to quarrels which had taken place on the subject among certain clergymen high in office; but these were simply rumours, and nothing was in truth known. There was no more discreet clergyman in all the diocese than Dr. Tempest, and not a word had escaped from him as to the stormy nature of that meeting in the bishop's palace, at which he had attended with the bishop,—and at which Mrs. Proudie had attended also. When it is said that the fact of this coming commission was known to all Barsetshire, allusion is of course made to that portion of the inhabitants of Barsetshire to which clerical matters were dear; —and as such matters were specially dear to the inhabitants of the parish of Framley, the commission was discussed very eagerly in that parish, and was specially discussed by the Dowager Lady Lufton.

And there was a double interest attached to the commission in the parish of Framley by the fact that Mr. Robarts, the vicar, had been invited by Dr. Tem-

pest to be one of the clergymen who were to assist in making the inquiry. "I also propose to ask Mr. Oriel of Greshamsbury to join us," said Dr. Tempest. "The bishop wishes to appoint the other two, and has already named Mr. Thumble and Mr. Quiverful, who are both residents in the city. Perhaps his lordship may be right in thinking it better that the matter should not be left altogether in the hands of clergymen who hold livings in the diocese. You are no doubt aware that neither Mr. Thumble nor Mr. Quiverful do hold any benefice." Mr. Robarts felt,—as everybody else did feel who knew anything of the matter,—that Bishop Proudie was singularly ignorant in his knowledge of men, and that he showed his ignorance on this special occasion. "If he intended to name two such men he should at any rate have named three," said Dr. Thorne. "Mr. Thumble and Mr. Quiverful will simply be outvoted on the first day, and after that will give in their adhesion to the majority." "Mr. Thumble, indeed!" Lady Lufton had said, with much scorn in her voice. To her thinking, it was absurd in the highest degree that such men as Dr. Tempest and her Mr. Robarts should be asked to meet Mr. Thumble and Mr. Quiverful on a matter of ecclesiastical business. Outvoted! Of course they would be outvoted. Of course they would be so paralysed by fear at finding themselves in the presence of real gentlemen, that they would hardly be able to vote at all. Old Lady Lufton did not in fact utter words so harsh as these; but thoughts as harsh passed through her mind. The reader therefore will understand that much interest was felt on the subject at Framley Court, where Lady Lufton lived with her son and her daughter-in-law.

"They tell me," said Lady Lufton, "that both the archdeacon and Dr. Tempest think it right that a commission should be held. If so, I have no doubt that it is right."

"Mark says that the bishop could hardly do anything else," rejoined Mrs. Robarts.

"I dare say not, my dear. I suppose the bishop has somebody near him to tell him what he may do, and what he may not do. It would be terrible to think of, if it were not so. But yet, when I hear that he has named such men as Mr. Thumble and Mr. Quiverful, I cannot but feel that the whole diocese is disgraced."

"Oh, Lady Lufton, that is such a strong word," said Mrs. Robarts.

"It may be strong, but it is none the less true," said Lady Lufton.

And from talking on the subject of the Crawleys, Lady Lufton soon advanced, first to a desire for some action, and then to acting. "I think, my dear, I will go over and see Mrs. Crawley," said Lady Lufton the elder to Lady Lufton the younger. Lady Lufton the younger had nothing to urge against this; but she did not offer to accompany the elder lady. I attempted to explain in the early part of this story that there still existed a certain understanding between Mrs. Crawley and Lord Lufton's wife, and that kindnesses occasionally passed from Framley Court to Hogglestock Parsonage; but on this occasion young Lady Lufton,—the Lucy Robarts who had once passed certain days of her life with the Crawleys at Hogglestock,—did not choose to accompany her mother-in-law; and therefore Mrs. Robarts was invited to do so. "I think it may comfort her to know that she has our sympathy,"

the elder woman said to the younger as they made their journey together.

When the carriage stopped before the little wicket-gate, from whence a path led through a ragged garden from the road to Mr. Crawley's house, Lady Lufton hardly knew how to proceed. The servant came to the door of the carriage, and asked for her orders. "H—m—m, ha, yes; I think I 'll send in my card; —and say that I hope Mrs. Crawley will be able to see me. Won't that be best; eh, Fanny?" Fanny, otherwise Mrs. Robarts, said that she thought that would be best; and the card and message were carried in.

It was happily the case that Mr. Crawley was not at home. Mr. Crawley was away at Hoggle End, reading to the brickmakers, or turning the mangles of their wives, or teaching them theology, or politics, or history, after his fashion. In these days he spent, perhaps, the happiest hours of his life down at Hoggle End. I say that his absence was a happy chance, because, had he been at home, he would certainly have said something, or done something, to offend Lady Lufton. He would either have refused to see her, or when seeing her he would have bade her hold her peace and not interfere with matters which did not concern her, or,—more probable still,—he would have sat still and sullen, and have spoken not at all. But he was away, and Mrs. Crawley sent out word by the servant that she would be most proud to see her ladyship, if her ladyship would be pleased to alight. Her ladyship did alight, and walked into the parsonage, followed by Mrs. Robarts.

Grace was with her mother. Indeed, Jane had

been there also when the message was brought in, but she fled into back regions, overcome by shame as to her frock. Grace, I think, would have fled too, had she not been bound in honour to support her mother. Lady Lufton, as she entered, was very gracious, struggling with all the power of her womanhood so to carry herself that there should be no outwardly visible sign of her rank or her wealth,—but not altogether succeeding. Mrs. Robarts, on her first entrance, said only a word or two of greeting to Mrs. Crawley, and kissed Grace, whom she had known intimately in early years. "Lady Lufton," said Mrs. Crawley, "I am afraid this is a very poor place for you to come to; but you have known that of old, and therefore I need hardly apologise."

"Sometimes I like poor places best," said Lady Lufton. Then there was a pause, after which Lady Lufton addressed herself to Grace, seeking some subject for immediate conversation. "You have been down at Allington, my dear, have you not?" Grace, in a whisper, said that she had. "Staying with the Dales, I believe? I know the Dales well by name, and I have always heard that they are charming people."

"I like them very much," said Grace. And then there was another pause.

"I hope your husband is pretty well, Mrs. Crawley?" said Lady Lufton.

"He is pretty well,—not quite strong. I dare say you know, Lady Lufton, that he has things to vex him?" Mrs. Crawley felt that it was the need of the moment that the only possible subject of conversation in that house should be introduced; and therefore she brought it in at once, not loving the subject, but

being strongly conscious of the necessity. Lady Lufton meant to be good-natured, and therefore Mrs. Crawley would do all in her power to make Lady Lufton's mission easy to her.

"Indeed, yes," said her ladyship; "we do know that."

"We feel so much for you and Mr. Crawley," said Mrs. Robarts; "and are so sure that your sufferings are unmerited." This was not discreet on the part of Mrs. Robarts, as she was the wife of one of the clergymen who had been selected to form the commission of inquiry; and so Lady Lufton told her on their way home.

"You are very kind," said Mrs. Crawley. "We must only bear it with such fortitude as God will give us. We are told that He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."

"And so He does, my dear," said the old lady, very solemnly. "So He does. Surely you have felt that it is so?"

"I struggle not to complain," said Mrs. Crawley.

"I know that you struggle bravely. I hear of you, and I admire you for it, and I love you." It was still the old lady who was speaking, and now she had at last been roused out of her difficulty as to words, and had risen from her chair, and was standing before Mrs. Crawley. "It is because you do not complain, because you are so great and so good, because your character is so high, and your spirit so firm, that I could not resist the temptation of coming to you. Mrs. Crawley, if you will let me be your friend, I shall be proud of your friendship."

"Your ladyship is too good," said Mrs. Crawley.

"Do not talk to me after that fashion," said Lady Lufton. "If you do I shall be disappointed, and feel myself thrown back. You know what I mean." She paused for an answer; but Mrs. Crawley had no answer to make. She simply shook her head, not knowing why she did so. But we may know. We can understand that she had felt that the friendship offered to her by Lady Lufton was an impossibility. She had decided within her own breast that it was so, though she did not know that she had to come to such decision. "I wish you to take me at my word, Mrs. Crawley," continued Lady Lufton. "What can we do for you? We know that you are distressed."

"Yes,—we are distressed."

"And we know how cruel circumstances have been to you. Will you not forgive me for being plain?"

"I have nothing to forgive," said Mrs. Crawley.

"Lady Lufton means," said Mrs. Robarts, "that in asking you to talk openly to her of your affairs, she wishes you to remember that——I think you know what we mean," said Mrs. Robarts, knowing very well herself what she did mean, but not knowing at all how to express herself.

"Lady Lufton is very kind," said Mrs. Crawley, "and so are you, Mrs. Robarts. I know how good you both are, and for how much it behoves me to be grateful." These words were very cold, and the voice in which they were spoken was very cold. They made Lady Lufton feel that it was beyond her power to proceed with the work of her mission in its intended spirit. It is ever so much easier to proffer kindness graciously than to receive it with grace. Lady Lufton had intended to say, "Let us be women together; women

bound by humanity, and not separated by rank, and let us open our hearts freely. Let us see how we may be of comfort to each other." And could she have succeeded in this, she would have spread out her little plans of succour with so loving a hand that she would have conquered the woman before her. But the suffering spirit cannot descend from its dignity of reticence. It has a nobility of its own, made sacred by many tears, by the flowing of streams of blood from unseen wounds, which cannot descend from its daïs to receive pity and kindness. A consciousness of undeserved woe produces a grandeur of its own, with which the high-souled sufferer will not easily part. Baskets full of eggs, pounds of eleemosynary butter, quarters of given pork, even second-hand clothing from the wardrobe of some richer sister,—even money, unsophisticated money, she could accept. She had learned to know that it was a portion of her allotted misery to take such things,—for the sake of her children and her husband,—and to be thankful for them. She did take them, and was thankful; and in the taking she submitted herself to the rod of cruel circumstances; but she could not even yet bring herself to accept spoken pity from a stranger, and to kiss the speaker.

"Can we not do something to help you?" said Mrs. Robarts. She would not have spoken but that she perceived that Lady Lufton had completed her appeal, and that Mrs. Crawley did not seem prepared to answer it.

"You have done much to help us," said Mrs. Crawley. "The things you have sent to us have been very serviceable."

"But we mean something more than that," said Lady Lufton.

"I do not know what there is more," said Mrs. Crawley. "A bit to eat and something to wear;—that seems to be all that we have to care for now."

"But we were afraid that this coming trial must cause you so much anxiety."

"Of course it causes anxiety;—but what can we do? It must be so. It cannot be put off, or avoided. We have made up our minds to it now, and almost wish that it would come quicker. If it were once over I think that he would be better whatever the result might be."

Then there was another lull in the conversation, and Lady Lufton began to be afraid that her visit would be a failure. She thought that perhaps she might get on better if Grace were not in the room, and she turned over in her mind various schemes for sending her away. And perhaps her task would be easier if Mrs. Robarts also could be banished for a time. "Fanny, my dear," she said at last, boldly, "I know you have a little plan to arrange with Miss Crawley. Perhaps you will be more likely to be successful if you can take a turn with her alone." There was not much subtlety in her ladyship's scheme; but it answered the proposed purpose, and the two elder ladies were soon left face to face, so that Lady Lufton had a fair pretext for making another attempt. "Dear Mrs. Crawley," she said, "I do so long to say a word to you, but I fear that I may be thought to interfere."

"Oh, no, Lady Lufton; I have no feeling of that kind."

"I have asked your daughter and Mrs. Robarts to go out because I can speak more easily to you alone. I wish I could teach you to trust me."

"I do trust you."

"As a friend, I mean;—as a real friend. If it should be the case, Mrs. Crawley, that a jury should give a verdict against your husband,—what will you do then? Perhaps I ought not to suppose that it is possible."

"Of course we know that is possible," said Mrs. Crawley. Her voice was stern, and there was in it a tone almost of offence. As she spoke she did not look at her visitor, but sat with her face averted and her arms akimbo on the table.

"Yes; it is possible," said Lady Lufton. "I suppose there is not one in the county who does not truly wish that it may not be so. But it is right to be prepared for all alternatives. In such case have you thought what you will do?"

"I do not know what they would do to him," said she.

"I suppose that for some time he would be——"

"Put in prison," said Mrs. Crawley, speaking very quickly, bringing out the words with a sharp eagerness that was quite unusual to her. "They will send him to gaol. Is it not so, Lady Lufton?"

"I suppose it would be so; not for long I should hope; but I presume that such would be the sentence for some short period."

"And I might not go with him?"

"No; that would be impossible."

"And the house, and the living; would they let him have them again when he came out?"

"Ah! that I cannot say. That will depend much, probably, on what these clergymen will report. I hope he will not put himself in opposition to them."

"I do not know. I cannot say. It is probable that he may do so. It is not easy for a man so injured as

he has been, and one at the same time so great in intelligence, to submit himself gently to such inquiries. When ill is being done to himself or others he is very prone to oppose it."

"But these gentlemen do not wish to do him ill, Mrs. Crawley."

"I cannot say. I do not know. When I think of it I see that there is nothing but ruin on every side. What is the use of talking of it? Do not be angry, Lady Lufton, if I say that it is of no use."

"But I desire to be of use,—of real use. If it should be the case, Mrs. Crawley, that your husband should be—detained at Barchester——"

"You mean imprisoned, Lady Lufton."

"Yes, I mean imprisoned. If it should be so, then do you bring yourself and your children,—all of them, —over to Framley, and I will find a home for you while he is lost to you."

"Oh, Lady Lufton; I could not do that."

"Yes, you can. You have not heard me yet. It would not be a comfort to you in such a home as that to sit at table with people who are partly strangers to you. But there is a cottage nearly adjoining to the house, which you shall have all to yourself. The bailiff lived in it once, and others have lived in it who belong to the place; but it is empty now and it shall be made comfortable." The tears were now running down Mrs. Crawley's face, so that she could not answer a word.

"Of course it is my son's property, and not mine, but he has commissioned me to say that it is most heartily at your service. He begs that in such case you will occupy it. And I beg the same. And your

old friend Lucy has desired me also to ask you in her name."

"Lady Lufton, I could not do that," said Mrs. Crawley through her tears.

"You must think better of it, my dear. I do not scruple to advise you, because I am older than you, and have experience of the world." This, I think, taken in the ordinary sense of the words, was a boast on the part of Lady Lufton, for which but little true pretence existed. Lady Lufton's experience of the world at large was not perhaps extensive. Nevertheless she knew what one woman might offer to another, and what one woman might receive from another. "You would be better over with me, my dear, than you could be elsewhere. You will not misunderstand me if I say that, under such circumstances, it would do your husband good that you and your children should be under our protection during his period of temporary seclusion. We stand well in the county. Perhaps I ought not to say so, but I do not know how otherwise to explain myself; and when it is known, by the bishop and others, that you have come to us during that sad time, it will be understood that we think well of Mr. Crawley, in spite of anything that a jury may say of him. Do you see that, my dear? And we do think well of him. I have known of your husband for many years, though I have not personally had the pleasure of much acquaintance with him. He was over at Framley once at my request, and I had great occasion then to respect him. I do respect him; and I shall feel grateful to him if he will allow you to put yourself and your children under my wing, as being an old woman, should this misfortune fall upon him. We hope that

it will not fall upon him; but it is always well to be provided for the worst."

In this way Lady Lufton at last made her speech and opened out the proposal with which she had come laden to Hogglestock. While she was speaking Mrs. Crawley's shoulder was still turned to her; but the speaker could see that the quick tears were pouring themselves down the cheeks of the woman whom she addressed. There was a downright honesty of thorough-going well-wishing charity about the proposition which overcame Mrs. Crawley altogether. She did not feel for a moment that it would be possible for her to go to Framley in such circumstances as those which have been suggested. As she thought of it all at the present moment, it seemed to her that her only appropriate home during the terrible period which was coming upon her, would be under the walls of the prison in which her husband would be incarcerated. But she fully appreciated the kindness which had suggested a measure, which, if carried into execution, would make the outside world feel that her husband was respected in the county, despite the degradation to which he was subjected. She felt all this, but her heart was too full to speak.

"Say that it shall be so, my dear," continued Lady Lufton. "Just give me one nod of assent, and the cottage shall be ready for you should it so chance that you should require it."

But Mrs. Crawley did not give the nod of assent. With her face still averted, while the tears were still running down her cheeks, she muttered but a word or two. "I could not do that, Lady Lufton; I could not do that."

"You know at any rate what my wishes are, and as you become calmer you will think of it. There is quite time enough, and I am speaking of an alternative which may never happen. My dear friend Mrs. Robarts, who is now with your daughter, wishes Miss Crawley to go over to Framley Parsonage while this inquiry among the clergymen is going on. They all say it is the most ridiculous thing in the world,—this inquiry. But the bishop, you know, is so silly! We all think that if Miss Crawley would go for a week or so to Framley Parsonage, that it will show how happy we all are to receive her. It should be while Mr. Robarts is employed in his part of the work. What do you say, Mrs. Crawley? We at Framley are all clearly of opinion that it will be best that it should be known that the people in the county uphold your husband. Miss Crawley would be back, you know, before the trial comes on. I hope you will let her come, Mrs. Crawley?"

But even to this proposition Mrs. Crawley could give no assent, though she expressed no direct dissent. As regarded her own feelings, she would much have preferred to have been left to live through her misery alone; but she could not but appreciate the kindness which endeavoured to throw over her and hers in their trouble the ægis of first-rate county respectability. She was saved from the necessity of giving a direct answer to this suggestion by the return of Mrs. Robarts and Grace herself. The door was opened slowly, and they crept into the room as though they were aware that their presence would be hardly welcomed.

"Is the carriage there, Fanny?" said Lady Lufton. "It is almost time for us to think of returning home."

Mrs. Robarts said that the carriage was standing within twenty yards of the door. "Then I think we will make a start," said Lady Lufton. "Have you succeeded in persuading Miss Crawley to come over to Framley in April?"

Mrs. Robarts made no answer to this, but looked at Grace; and Grace looked down upon the ground.

"I have spoken to Mrs. Crawley," said Lady Lufton, "and they will think of it." Then the two ladies took their leave, and walked out to their carriage.

"What does she say about your plan?" Mrs. Robarts asked.

"She is too broken-hearted to say anything," Lady Lufton answered. "Should it happen that he is convicted, we must come over and take her. She will have no power then to resist us in anything."

CHAPTER XXII.

MRS. DOBBS BROUGHTON PILES HER FAGOTS.

THE picture still progressed up in Mrs. Dobbs Broughton's room, and the secret was still kept, or supposed to be kept. Miss Van Siever was, at any rate, certain that her mother had heard nothing of it, and Mrs. Broughton reported from day to day that her husband had not as yet interfered. Nevertheless, there was in these days a great gloom upon the Dobbs Broughton household, so much so that Conway Dalrymple had more than once suggested to Mrs. Broughton that the work should be discontinued. But the mistress of the house would not consent to this. In answer to these offers, she was wont to declare in somewhat mysterious language, that any misery coming upon herself was matter of moment to nobody,—hardly even to herself, as she was quite prepared to encounter moral and social death without delay, if not an absolute physical demise; as to which latter alternative, she seemed to think that even that might not be so far distant as some people chose to believe. What was the cause of the gloom over the house neither Conway Dalrymple nor Miss Van Siever understood, and to speak the truth, Mrs. Broughton did not quite understand the cause herself. She knew well enough, no doubt, that her husband came home always sullen,

and sometimes tipsy, and that things were not going well in the City. She had never understood much about the City, being satisfied with an assurance that had come to her in early days from her friends, that there was a mine of wealth in Hook Court, from whence would always come for her use, house and furniture, a carriage and horses, dresses and jewels, which latter, if not quite real, should be manufactured of the best sham substitute known. Soon after her brilliant marriage with Mr. Dobbs Broughton, she had discovered that the carriage and horses, and the sham jewels, did not lift her so completely into a terrestrial paradise as she had taught herself to expect that they would do. Her brilliant drawing-room, with Dobbs Broughton for a companion, was not an elysium. But though she had found out early in her married life that something was still wanting to her, she had by no means confessed to herself that the carriage and horses and sham jewels were bad, and it can hardly be said that she had repented. She had endeavoured to patch up matters with a little romance, and then had fallen upon Conway Dalrymple,—meaning no harm. Indeed, love with her, as it never could have meant much good, was not likely to mean much harm. That somebody should pretend to love her, to which pretence she might reply by a pretence of friendship,—this was the little excitement which she craved, and by which she had once flattered herself that something of an elysium might yet be created for her. Mr. Dobbs Broughton had unreasonably expressed a dislike to this innocent amusement,—very unreasonably, knowing, as he ought to have known, that he himself did so very little towards providing the necessary elysium by any qualities of his

own. For a few weeks this interference from her husband had enhanced the amusement, giving an additional excitement to the game. She felt herself to be a woman misunderstood and ill-used; and to some women there is nothing so charming as a little mild ill-usage, which does not interfere with their creature comforts, with their clothes, or their carriage, or their sham jewels; but suffices to afford them the indulgence of a grievance. Of late, however, Mr. Dobbs Broughton had become a little too rough in his language, and things had gone uncomfortably. She suspected that Conway Dalrymple was not the only cause of all this. She had an idea that Mr. Musselboro and Mrs. Van Siever had it in their power to make themselves unpleasant, and that they were exercising this power. Of his business in the City her husband never spoke to her, nor she to him. Her own fortune had been very small, some couple of thousand pounds or so, and she conceived that she had no pretext on which she could, unasked, interrogate him about his money. She had no knowledge that marriage of itself had given her the right to such interference; and had such knowledge been hers she would have had no desire to interfere. She hoped that the carriage and sham jewels would be continued to her; but she did not know how to frame any question on the subject. Touching the other difficulty,—the Conway Dalrymple difficulty,—she had her ideas. The tenderness of her friendship had been trodden upon and outraged by the rough foot of an overbearing husband, and she was ill-used. She would obey. It was becoming to her as a wife that she should submit. She would give up Conway Dalrymple, and would induce him,—in spite of his violent

attachment to herself,—to take a wife. She herself would choose a wife for him. She herself would, with suicidal hands, destroy the romance of her own life, since an overbearing, brutal husband demanded that it should be destroyed. She would sacrifice her own feelings, and do all in her power to bring Conway Dalrymple and Clara Van Siever together. If, after that, some poet did not immortalise her friendship in Byronic verse, she certainly would not get her due. Perhaps Conway Dalrymple would himself become a poet in order that this might be done properly. For it must be understood that, though she expected Conway Dalrymple to marry, she expected also that he should be Byronically wretched after his marriage on account of his love for herself.

But there was certainly something wrong over and beyond the Dalrymple difficulty. The servants were not as civil as they used to be, and her husband, when she suggested to him a little dinner-party, snubbed her most unmercifully. The giving of dinner-parties had been his glory, and she had made the suggestion simply with the view of pleasing him. "If the world were going round the wrong way, a woman would still want a party," he had said, sneering at her. "It was of you I was thinking, Dobbs," she replied; "not of myself. I care little for such gatherings." After that she retired to her own room with a romantic tear in each eye, and told herself that, had chance thrown Conway Dalrymple into her way before she had seen Dobbs Broughton, she would have been the happiest woman in the world. She sat for a while looking into vacancy, and thinking that it would be very nice to break her heart. How should she set about it? Should she

take to her bed and grow thin? She would begin by eating no dinner for ever so many days together. At lunch her husband was never present, and therefore the broken heart could be displayed at dinner without much positive suffering. In the mean time she would implore Conway Dalrymple to get himself married with as little delay as possible, and she would lay upon him her positive order to restrain himself from any word of affection addressed to herself. She, at any rate, would be pure, high-minded, and self-sacrificing, —although romantic and poetic also, as was her nature.

The picture was progressing, and so also, as it had come about, was the love-affair between the artist and his model. Conway Dalrymple had begun to think that he might, after all, do worse than make Clara Van Siever his wife. Clara Van Siever was handsome, and undoubtedly clever, and Clara Van Siever's mother was certainly rich. And, in addition to this, the young lady herself began to like the man into whose society she was thrown. The affair seemed to flourish, and Mrs. Dobbs Broughton should have been delighted. She told Clara, with a very serious air, that she was delighted, bidding Clara, at the same time, to be very cautious, as men were so fickle, and as Conway, though the best fellow in the world, was not, perhaps, altogether free from that common vice of men. Indeed, it might have been surmised, from a word or two which Mrs. Broughton allowed to escape, that she considered poor Conway to be more than ordinarily afflicted in that way. Miss Van Siever at first only pouted, and said that there was nothing in it. "There is something in it, my dear, certainly," said Mrs. Dobbs Broughton: "and there can be no earthly reason why there should

not be a great deal in it." "There is nothing in it," said Miss Van Siever, impetuously; "and if you will continue to speak of Mr. Dalrymple in that way, I must give up the picture." "As for that," said Mrs. Broughton, "I conceive that we are both of us bound to the young man now, seeing that he has given so much time to the work." "I am not bound to him at all," said Miss Van Siever.

Mrs. Broughton also told Conway Dalrymple that she was delighted,—oh, so much delighted! He had obtained permission to come in one morning before the time of sitting, so that he might work at his canvas independently of his model. As was his custom, he made his own way upstairs and commenced his work alone,—having been expressly told by Mrs. Broughton that she would not come to him till she brought Clara with her. But she did go up to the room in which the artist was painting, without waiting for Miss Van Siever. Indeed, she was at this time so anxious as to the future welfare of her two young friends that she could not restrain herself from speaking either to the one or to the other, whenever any opportunity for such speech came round. To have left Conway Dalrymple at work upstairs without going to him was impossible to her. So she went, and then took the opportunity of expressing to her friend her ideas as to his past and future conduct.

"Yes, it is very good; very good, indeed," she said, standing before the easel, and looking at the half-completed work. "I do not know that you ever did anything better."

"I never can tell myself till a picture is finished whether it is going to be good or not," said Dalrymple, thinking really of his picture and of nothing else.

"I am sure this will be good," she said, "and I suppose it is because you have thrown so much heart into it. It is not mere industry that will produce good work, nor yet skill, nor even genius. More than this is required. The heart of the artist must be thrust with all its gushing tides into the performance." By this time he knew all the tones of her voice and their various meanings, and immediately became aware that at the present moment she was intent upon something beyond the picture. She was preparing for a little scene, and was going to give him some advice. He understood it all, but as he was really desirous of working at his canvas, and was rather averse to having a scene at that moment, he made a little attempt to disconcert her. "It is the heart that gives success," she said, while he was considering how he might best put an extinguisher upon her romance for the occasion.

"Not at all, Mrs. Broughton; success depends on elbow-grease."

"On what, Conway?"

"On elbow-grease,—hard work, that is,—and I must work hard now if I mean to take advantage of to-day's sitting. The truth is, I don't give enough hours of work to it." And he leaned upon his stick, and daubed away briskly at the background, and then stood for a moment looking at his canvas with his head a little on one side, as though he could not withdraw his attention for a moment from the thing he was doing.

"You mean to say, Conway, that you would rather that I should not speak to you."

"Oh, no, Mrs. Broughton, I did not mean that at all."

"I won't interrupt you at your work. What I have to say is perhaps of no great moment. Indeed, words between you and me never can have much importance now. Can they, Conway?"

"I don't see that at all," said he, still working away with his brush.

"Do you not? I do. They should never amount to more,—they can never amount to more than the common, ordinary courtesies of life; what I call the greetings and good-byeings of conversation." She said this in a low, melancholy tone of voice, not intending to be in any degree jocose. "How seldom is it that conversation between ordinary friends goes beyond that."

"Don't you think it does?" said Conway, stepping back and taking another look at his picture. "I find myself talking to all manner of people about all manner of things."

"You are different from me. I cannot talk to all manner of people."

"Politics, you know, and art, and a little scandal, and the wars, with a dozen other things, make talking easy enough, I think. I grant you this, that it is very often a great bore. Hardly a day passes that I don't wish to cut out somebody's tongue."

"Do you wish to cut out my tongue, Conway?"

He began to perceive that she was determined to talk about herself, and that there was no remedy. He dreaded it, not because he did not like the woman, but from a conviction that she was going to make some comparison between herself and Clara Van Siever. In his ordinary humour he liked a little pretence at romance, and was rather good at that sort of love-

making which in truth means anything but love. But just now he was really thinking of matrimony, and had on this very morning acknowledged to himself that he had become sufficiently attached to Clara Van Siever to justify him in asking her to be his wife. In his present mood he was not anxious for one of those tilts with blunted swords and half-severed lances in the lists of Cupid of which Mrs. Dobbs Broughton was so fond. Nevertheless, if she insisted that he should now descend into the arena and go through the paraphernalia of a mock tournament, he must obey her. It is the hardship of men that when called upon by women for romance, they are bound to be romantic, whether the opportunity serves them or does not. A man must produce romance, or at least submit to it, when duly summoned, even though he should have a sore throat or a headache. He is a brute if he decline such an encounter,—and feels that, should he so decline persistently, he will ever after be treated as a brute. There are many Potiphar's wives who never dream of any mischief, and Josephs who are very anxious to escape, though they are asked to return only whisper for whisper. Mrs. Dobbs Broughton had asked him whether he wished that her tongue should be cut out, and he had of course replied that her words had always been a joy to him,—never a trouble. It occurred to him as he made his little speech that it would only have served her right if he had answered her quite in another strain; but she was a woman, and was young and pretty, and was entitled to flattery. "They have always been a joy to me," he said, repeating his last words as he strove to continue his work.

"A deadly joy," she replied, not quite knowing what

she herself meant. "A deadly joy, Conway. I wish with all my heart that we had never known each other."

"I do not. I will never wish away the happiness of my life, even should it be followed by misery."

"You are a man, and if trouble comes upon you, you can bear it on your own shoulders. A woman suffers more, just because another's shoulders may have to bear the burden."

"When she has got a husband, you mean?"

"Yes,—when she has a husband."

"It 's the same with a man when he has a wife." Hitherto the conversation had had so much of milk-and-water in its composition, that Dalrymple found himself able to keep it up and go on with his background at the same time. If she could only be kept in the same dim cloud of sentiment, if the hot rays of the sun of romance could be kept from breaking through the mist till Miss Van Siever should come, it might still be well. He had known her to wander about within the clouds for an hour together, without being able to find her way into the light. "It 's all the same with a man when he has got a wife," he said. "Of course one has to suffer for two, when one, so to say, is two."

"And what happens when one has to suffer for three?" she asked.

"You mean when a woman has children?"

"I mean nothing of the kind, Conway; and you must know that I do not, unless your feelings are indeed blunted. But worldly success has, I suppose, blunted them."

"I rather fancy not," he said. "I think they are pretty nearly as sharp as ever."

"I know mine are. Oh, how I wish I could rid

myself of them! But it cannot be done. Age will not blunt them,—I am sure of that," said Mrs. Broughton. "I wish it would."

He had determined not to talk about herself if the subject could be in any way avoided; but now he felt that he was driven up into a corner;—now he was forced to speak to her of her own personality. "You have no experience yet as to that. How can you say what age will do?"

"Age does not go by years," said Mrs. Dobbs Broughton. "We all know that. 'His hair was grey, but not with years.' Look here, Conway," and she moved back her tresses from off her temples to show him that there were grey hairs behind. He did not see them; and had they been very visible she might not perhaps have been so ready to exhibit them. "No one can say that length of years has blanched them. I have no secrets from you about my age. One should not be grey before one has reached thirty."

"I did not see a changed hair."

"'T was the fault of your eyes, then, for there are plenty of them. And what is it has made them grey?"

"They say that hot rooms will do it."

"Hot rooms! No, Conway, it does not come from heated atmosphere. It comes from a cold heart, a chilled heart, a frozen heart, a heart that is all ice." She was getting out of the cloud into the heat now, and he could only hope that Miss Van Siever would come soon. "The world is beginning with you, Conway, and yet you are as old as I am. It is ending with me, and yet I am as young as you are. But I do not know why I talk of all this. It is simply folly,—utter folly. I had not meant to speak of myself;

but I did wish to say a few words to you of your own future. I suppose I may still speak to you as a friend?"

"I hope you will always do that."

"Nay,—I will make no such promise. That I will always have a friend's feeling for you, a friend's interest in your welfare, a friend's triumph in your success, —that I will promise. But friendly words, Conway, are sometimes misunderstood."

"Never by me," said he.

"No, not by you,—certainly not by you. I did not mean that. I did not expect that you should misinterpret them." Then she laughed hysterically,—a little low, gurgling, hysterical laugh; and after that she wiped her eyes, and then she smiled, and then she put her hand very gently upon his shoulder. "Thank God, Conway, we are quite safe there,—are we not?"

He had made a blunder, and it was necessary that he should correct it. His watch was lying in the trough of his easel, and he looked at it and wondered why Miss Van Siever was not there. He had tripped, and he must make a little struggle and recover his step. "As I said before, it shall never be misunderstood by me. I have never been vain enough to suppose for a moment that there was any other feeling,—not for a moment. You women can be so careful, while we men are always off our guard! A man loves because he cannot help it; but a woman has been careful, and answers him—with friendship. Perhaps I am wrong to say that I never thought of winning anything more; but I never think of winning more now." Why the mischief did n't Miss Van Siever come! In another five minutes, despite himself, he would be on his knees,

making a mock declaration, and she would be pouring forth the vial of her mock wrath, or giving him mock counsel as to the restraint of his passion. He had gone through it all before, and was tired of it; but for his life he did not know how to help himself.

"Conway," said she, gravely, "how dare you address me in such language?"

"Of course it is very wrong; I know that."

"I 'm not speaking of myself, now. I have learned to think so little of myself, as even to be indifferent to the feeling of the injury you are doing me. My life is a blank, and I almost think that nothing can hurt me further. I have not heart left enough to break; no, not enough to be broken. It is not of myself that I am thinking, when I ask you how you dare to address me in such language. Do you not know that it is an injury to another?"

"To what other?" asked Conway Dalrymple, whose mind was becoming rather confused, and who was not quite sure whether the other one was Mr. Dobbs Broughton, or somebody else.

"To that poor girl who is coming here now, who is devoted to you, and to whom, I do not doubt, you have uttered words which ought to have made it impossible for you to speak to me as you spoke not a moment since."

Things were becoming very grave and difficult. They would have been very grave, indeed, had not some god saved him by sending Miss Van Siever to his rescue at this moment. He was beginning to think what he would say in answer to the accusation now made, when his eager ear caught the sound of her step upon the stairs; and before the pause in the conver-

sation which the circumstances admitted had given place to the necessity for further speech, Miss Van Siever had knocked at the door and had entered the room. He was rejoiced, and I think that Mrs. Broughton did not regret the interference. It is always well that these little dangerous scenes should be brought to sudden ends. The last details of such romances, if drawn out to their natural conclusions, are apt to be uncomfortable, if not dull. She did not want him to go down on his knees, knowing that the getting up again is always awkward.

"Clara, I began to think you were never coming," said Mrs. Broughton, with her sweetest smile.

"I began to think so myself also," said Clara. "And I believe this must be the last sitting, or, at any rate, the last but one."

"Is anything the matter at home?" said Mrs. Broughton, clasping her hands together.

"Nothing very much; mamma asked me a question or two this morning, and I said I was coming here. Had she asked me why, I should have told her."

"But what did she ask? What did she say?"

"She does not always make herself very intelligible. She complains without telling what she complains of. But she muttered something about artists which was not complimentary, and I suppose, therefore, that she has a suspicion. She stayed ever so late this morning, and we left the house together. She will ask some direct question to-night, or before long, and then there will be an end of it."

"Let us make the best of our time, then," said Dalrymple; and the sitting was arranged; Miss Van Siever went down on her knees with her hammer in

her hand, and the work began. Mrs. Broughton had twisted a turban round Clara's head, as she always did on these occasions, and assisted to arrange the drapery. She used to tell herself as she did so, that she was like Isaac, piling the fagots for her own sacrifice. Only Isaac had piled them in ignorance, and she piled them conscious of the sacrificial flames. And Isaac had been saved; whereas it was impossible that the catching of any ram in any thicket could save her. But, nevertheless, she arranged the drapery with all her skill, piling the fagots ever so high for her own pyre. In the mean time Conway Dalrymple painted away, thinking more of his picture than he did of one woman or of the other.

After a while, when Mrs. Broughton had piled the fagots as high as she could pile them, she got up from her seat and prepared to leave the room. Much of the pile consisted, of course, in her own absence during a portion of these sittings. "Conway," she said, as she went, "if this is to be the last sitting or the last but one, you should make the most of it." Then she threw upon him a very peculiar glance over the head of the kneeling Jael, and withdrew. Jael, who in those moments would be thinking more of the fatigue of her position than of anything else, did not at all take home to herself the peculiar meaning of her friend's words. Conway Dalrymple understood them thoroughly, and thought that he might as well take the advice given to him. He had made up his mind to propose to Miss Van Siever, and why should he not do so now? He went on with his brush for a couple of minutes without saying a word, working as well as he could work, and then resolved that he would at once begin the other

task. "Miss Van Siever," he said, "I 'm afraid you are tired."

"Not more than usually tired. It is fatiguing to be slaying Sisera by the hour together. I do get to hate this block." The block was the dummy by which the form of Sisera was supposed to be typified.

"Another sitting will about finish it," said he, "so that you need not positively distress yourself now. Will you rest yourself for a minute or two?" He had already perceived that the attitude in which Clara was posed before him was not one in which an offer of marriage could be received and replied to with advantage.

"Thank you, I am not tired yet," said Clara, not changing her fixed glance of national wrath with which she regarded her wooden Sisera as she held her hammer on high.

"But I am. There; we will rest for a moment." Dalrymple was aware that Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, though she was very assiduous in piling her fagots, never piled them for long together. If he did not make haste she would be back upon them before he could get his word spoken. When he put down his brush, and got up from his chair, and stretched out his arm as a man does when he ceases for a moment from his work, Clara of course got up also, and seated herself. She was used to her turban and her drapery, and therefore thought not of it at all; and he also was used to it, seeing her in it two or three times a week; but now that he intended to accomplish a special purpose, the turban and the drapery seemed to be in the way. "I do so hope you will like the picture," he said, as he was thinking of this.

"I don't think I shall. But you will understand

that it is natural that a girl should not like herself in such a portraiture as that."

"I don't know why. I can understand that you specially should not like the picture; but I think that most women in London in your place would at any rate say that they did."

"Are you angry with me?"

"What; for telling the truth? No, indeed." He was standing opposite to his easel, looking at the canvas, shifting his head about so as to change the lights, and observing critically this blemish and that; and yet he was all the while thinking how he had best carry out his purpose. "It will have been a prosperous picture to me," he said at last, "if it leads to the success of which I am ambitious."

"I am told that all you do is successful now,—merely because you do it. That is the worst of success."

"What is the worst of success?"

"That when won by merit it leads to further success for the gaining of which no merit is necessary."

"I hope it may be so in my case. If it is not I shall have a very poor chance. Clara, I think you must know that I am not talking about my pictures."

"I thought you were."

"Indeed I am not. As for success in my profession, far as I am from thinking I merit it, I feel tolerably certain that I shall obtain it."

"You have obtained it."

"I am in the way to do so. Perhaps one out of ten struggling artists is successful, and for him the profession is very charming. It is certainly a sad feeling that there is so much of chance in the distribution of the prizes. It is a lottery. But one cannot complain

of that when one has drawn the prize." Dalrymple was not a man without self-possession, nor was he readily abashed, but he found it easier to talk of his profession than to make his offer. The turban was his difficulty. He had told himself over and over again within the last five minutes, that he would have long since said what he had to say had it not been for the turban. He had been painting all his life from living models,—from women dressed up in this or that costume, to suit the necessities of his picture,—but he had never made love to any of them. They had been simply models to him, and now he found that there was a difficulty. "Of that prize," he said, "I have made myself tolerably sure; but as to the other prize, I do not know. I wonder whether I am to have that." Of course Miss Van Siever understood well what was the prize of which he was speaking; and as she was a young woman with a will and purpose of her own, no doubt she was already prepared with an answer. But it was necessary that the question should be put to her in properly distinct terms. Conway Dalrymple certainly had not put his question in properly distinct terms at present. She did not choose to make any answer to his last words; and therefore simply suggested that as time was pressing he had better go on with his work. "I am quite ready now," said she.

"Stop half a moment. How much more you are thinking of the picture than I am! I do not care twopence for the picture. I will slit the canvas from top to bottom without a groan,—without a single inner groan,—if you will let me."

"For Heaven's sake do nothing of the kind! Why should you?"

"Just to show you that it is not for the sake of the picture that I come here. Clara——" Then the door was opened, and Isaac appeared, very weary, having been piling fagots with assiduity, till human nature could pile no more. Conway Dalrymple, who had made his way almost up to Clara's seat, turned round sharply towards his easel, in anger at having been disturbed. He should have been more grateful for all that his Isaac had done for him, and have recognised the fact that the fault had been with himself. Mrs. Broughton had been twelve minutes out of the room. She had counted them to be fifteen,—having no doubt made a mistake as to three,—and had told herself that with such a one as Conway Dalrymple, with so much of the work ready done to his hand for him, fifteen minutes should have been amply sufficient. When we reflect what her own thoughts must have been during the interval,—what it is to have to pile up such fagots as those, how she was, as it were, giving away a fresh morsel of her own heart during each minute that she allowed Clara and Conway Dalrymple to remain together, it cannot surprise us that her eyes should have become dizzy, and that she should not have counted the minutes with accurate correctness. Dalrymple turned to his picture angrily, but Miss Van Siever kept her seat and did not show the slightest emotion.

"My friends," said Mrs. Broughton, "this will not do. This is not working; this is not sitting."

"Mr. Dalrymple has been explaining to me the precarious nature of an artist's profession," said Clara.

"It is not precarious with him," said Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, sententiously.

"Not in a general way, perhaps; but to prove the

truth of his words he was going to treat Jeal worse than Jael treats Sisera."

"I was going to slit the picture from the top to the bottom."

"And why?" said Mrs. Broughton, putting up her hands to heaven in tragic horror.

"Just to show Miss Van Siever how little I care about it."

"And how little you care about her, too?" said Mrs. Broughton.

"She might take that as she liked." After this there was another genuine sitting, and the real work went on as though there had been no episode. Jael fixed her face, and held her hammer as though her mind and heart were solely bent on seeming to be slaying Sisera. Dalrymple turned his eyes from the canvas to the model, and from the model to the canvas, working with his hand all the while, as though that last pathetic "Clara" had never been uttered; and Mrs. Dobbs Broughton reclined on a sofa, looking at them and thinking of her own singularly romantic position till her mind was filled with a poetic frenzy. In one moment she resolved that she would hate Clara as woman was never hated by woman; and then there were daggers, and poison-cups, and strangling cords in her eye. In the next she was as firmly determined that she would love Mrs. Conway Dalrymple as woman never was loved by woman; and then she saw herself kneeling by a cradle, and tenderly nursing a baby, of which Conway was to be the father and Clara the mother. And so she went to sleep.

For some time Dalrymple did not observe this; but at last there was a little sound,—even the ill-nature of

Miss Demolines could hardly have called it a snore,—and he became aware that for practical purposes he and Miss Van Siever were again alone together. "Clara," he said, in a whisper. Mrs. Broughton instantly roused herself from her slumbers, and rubbed her eyes. "Dear, dear, dear," she said, "I declare, it 's past one. I 'm afraid I must turn you both out. One more sitting, I suppose, will finish it, Conway?"

"Yes, one more," said he. It was always understood that he and Clara should not leave the house together, and therefore he remained painting when she left the room. "And now, Conway," said Mrs. Broughton, "I suppose that all is over?"

"I don't know what you mean by all being over."

"No,—of course not. You look at it in another light, no doubt. Everything is beginning for you. But you must pardon me, for my heart is distracted,—distracted,—distracted!" Then she sat down upon the floor, and burst into tears. What was he to do? He thought that the woman should either give him up altogether, or not give him up. All this fuss about it was irrational! He would not have made love to Clara Van Siever in her room if she had not told him to do so!

"Maria," he said, in a very grave voice, "any sacrifice that is required on my part on your behalf I am ready to make."

"No, sir; the sacrifices shall all be made by me. It is the part of a woman to be ever sacrificial!" Poor Mrs. Dobbs Broughton! "You shall give up nothing. The world is at your feet, and you shall have everything,—youth, beauty, wealth, station, love,—love; and friendship also, if you will accept it from one so

poor, so broken, so secluded as I shall be." At each of the last words there had been a desperate sob; and as she was still crouching in the middle of the room, looking up into Dalrymple's face while he stood over her, the scene was one which had much in it that transcended the doings of everyday life, much that would be ever memorable, and much, I have no doubt, that was thoroughly enjoyed by the principal actor. As for Conway Dalrymple, he was so second-rate a personage in the whole thing, that it mattered little whether he enjoyed it or not. I don't think he did enjoy it. "And now, Conway," she said, "I will give you some advice. And when in after-days you shall remember this interview, and reflect how that advice was given you,—with what solemnity,"—here she clasped both her hands together,—"I think that you will follow it. Clara Van Siever will now become your wife."

"I do not know that at all," said Dalrymple.

"Clara Van Siever will now become your wife," repeated Mrs. Broughton in a louder voice, impatient of opposition. "Love her. Cleave to her. Make her flesh of your flesh and bone of your bone. But rule her! Yes, rule her! Let her be your second self, but not your first self. Rule her. Love her. Cleave to her. Do not leave her alone, to feed on her own thoughts as I have done,—as I have been forced to do. Now go. No, Conway, not a word; I will not hear a word. You must go, or I must." Then she rose quickly from her lowly attitude, and prepared herself for a dart at the door. It was better by far that he should go, and so he went.

An American when he has spent a pleasant day will tell you that he has had "a good time." I think that

Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, if she had ever spoken the truth of that day's employment, would have acknowledged that she had had "a good time." I think that she enjoyed her morning's work. But as for Conway Dalrymple, I doubt whether he did enjoy his morning's work. "A man may have too much of this sort of thing, and then he becomes very sick of his cake." Such was the nature of his thoughts as he returned to his own abode.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"WHY DON'T YOU HAVE AN 'IT' FOR YOURSELF?"

Of course it came to pass that Lily Dale and Emily Dunstable were soon very intimate, and that they saw each other every day. Indeed, before long they would have been living together in the same house had it not been that the squire had felt reluctant to abandon the independence of his own lodgings. When Mrs. Thorne had pressed her invitation for the second, and then for the third time, asking them both to come to her large house, he had begged his niece to go and leave him alone. "You need not regard me," he had said, speaking not with the whining voice of complaint, but with that thin tinge of melancholy which was usual to him. "I am so much alone down at Allington, that you need not mind leaving me." But Lily would not go on those terms, and therefore they still lived together in the lodgings. Nevertheless Lily was every day at Mrs. Thorne's house, and a great intimacy grew up between the girls. Emily Dunstable had neither brother nor sister, and Lily's nearest male relative in her own degree was now Miss Dunstable's betrothed husband. It was natural therefore that they should at any rate try to like each other. It afterwards came to pass that Lily did go to Mrs. Thorne's house and stayed

there for a while; but when that occurred the squire had gone back to Allington.

Among other generous kindnesses Mrs. Thorne insisted that Bernard should hire a horse for his cousin Lily. Emily Dunstable rode daily, and of course Captain Dale rode with her;—and now Lily joined the party. Almost before she knew what was being done she found herself provided with hat and habit and horse and whip. It was a way with Mrs. Thorne that they who came within the influence of her immediate sphere should be made to feel that the comforts and luxuries arising from her wealth belonged to a common stock, and were the joint property of them all. Things were not offered and taken and talked about, but they made their appearance, and were used as a matter of course. If you go to stay at a gentleman's house you understand that, as a matter of course, you will be provided with meat and drink. Some hosts furnish you also with cigars. A small number give you stabling and forage for your horse; and a very select few mount you on hunting days, and send you out with a groom and a second horse. Mrs. Thorne went beyond all others in this open-handed hospitality. She had enormous wealth at her command, and had but few of those all-absorbing drains upon wealth which in this country make so many rich men poor. She had no family property,—no place to keep up in which she did not live. She had no retainers to be maintained because they were retainers. She had neither sons nor daughters. Consequently she was able to be lavish in her generosity; and as her heart was very lavish, she would have given her friends gold to eat had gold been good for eating. Indeed, there was no measure in her

giving,—unless when the idea came upon her that the recipient of her favours was trading on them. Then she could hold her hand very stoutly.

Lily Dale had not liked the idea of being fitted out thus expensively. A box at the opera was all very well, as it was not procured especially for her. And tickets for other theatres did not seem to come unnaturally for a night or two. But her spirit had militated against the hat and the habit and the horse. The whip was a little present from Emily Dunstable, and that of course was accepted with a good grace. Then there came the horse,—as though from the heavens; there seemed to be ten horses, twenty horses, if anybody needed them. All these things seemed to flow naturally into Mrs. Thorne's establishment, like air through the windows. It was very pleasant, but Lily hesitated when she was told that a habit was to be given to her. "My dear old aunt insists," said Emily Dunstable. "Nobody ever thinks of refusing anything from her. If you only knew what some people will take, and some people will even ask, who have nothing to do with her at all!" "But I have nothing to do with her, —in that way, I mean," said Lily. "Oh, yes, you have," said Emily. "You and Bernard are as good as brother and sister, and Bernard and I are as good as man and wife, and my aunt and I are as good as mother and daughter. So you see, in a sort of a way, you are a child of the house." So Lily accepted the habit; but made a stand at the hat, and paid for that out of her own pocket. When the squire had seen Lily on horseback he asked her questions about it. "It was a hired horse, I suppose?" he said. "I think it came direct from heaven," said Lily.. "What do you

mean, Lily?" said the squire, angrily. "I mean that when people are so rich and good-natured as Mrs. Thorne it is no good inquiring where things come from. All that I know is that the horses come out of Potts' livery-stable. They talk of Potts as if he were a good-natured man who provides horses for the world without troubling anybody." Then the squire spoke to Bernard about it, saying that he should insist on defraying his niece's expenses. But Bernard swore that he could give his uncle no assistance. "I would not speak to her about such a thing for all the world," said Bernard. "Then I shall," said the squire.

In those days Lily thought much of Johnny Eames,—gave to him perhaps more of that thought which leads to love than she had ever given him before. She still heard the Crawley question discussed every day. Mrs. Thorne, as we all know, was at this time a Barsetshire personage, and was of course interested in Barsetshire subjects; and she was specially anxious in the matter, having strong hopes with reference to the marriage of Major Grantly and Grace, and strong hopes also that Grace's father might escape the fangs of justice. The Crawley case was constantly in Lily's ears, and as constantly she heard high praise awarded to Johnny for his kindness in going after the Arabins. "He must be a fine young fellow," said Mrs. Thorne, "and we 'll have him down at Chaldicotes some day. Old Lord De Guest found him out and made a friend of him, and old Lord De Guest was no fool." Lily was not altogether free from a suspicion that Mrs. Thorne knew the story of Johnny's love and was trying to serve Johnny,—as other people had tried to do, very ineffectually. When this suspicion came upon

her she would shut her heart against her lover's praises, and swear that she would stand by those two words which she had written in her book at home. But the suspicion would not be always there, and there did come upon her a conviction that her lover was more esteemed among men and women than she had been accustomed to believe. Her cousin, Bernard Dale, who certainly was regarded in the world as somebody, spoke of him as his equal; whereas in former days Bernard had always regarded Johnny Eames as standing low in the world's regard. Then Lily, when alone, would remember a certain comparison which she once made between Adolphus Crosbie and John Eames, when neither of the men had as yet pleaded his cause to her, and which had been very much in favour of the former. She had then declared that Johnny was a "mere clerk." She had a higher opinion of him now, —a much higher opinion, even though he could never be more to her than a friend.

In these days Lily's new ally, Emily Dunstable, seemed to Lily to be so happy! There was in Emily a complete realisation of that idea of ante-nuptial blessedness of which Lily had often thought so much. Whatever Emily did she did for Bernard; and, to give Captain Dale his due, he received all the sweets which were showered upon him with becoming signs of gratitude. I suppose it is always the case at such times that the girl has the best of it, and on this occasion Emily Dunstable certainly made the most of her happiness. "I do envy you," Lily said one day. The acknowledgment seemed to have been extorted from her involuntarily. She did not laugh as she spoke, or follow up what she had said with other words intended

to take away the joke of what she had uttered,—had it been a joke; but she sat silent, looking at the girl who was re-arranging flowers which Bernard had brought to her.

"I can't give him up to you, you know," said Emily.

"I don't envy you him, but 'it,'" said Lily.

"Then go and get an 'it' for yourself. Why don't you have an 'it' for yourself? You can have an 'it' to-morrow, if you like,—or two or three, if all that I hear is true."

"No, I can't," said Lily. "Things have gone wrong with me. Don't ask me anything more about it. Pray don't. I shan't speak of it if you do."

"Of course I will not if you tell me I must not."

"I do tell you so. I have been a fool to say anything about it. However, I have got over my envy now, and am ready to go out with your aunt. Here she is."

"Things have gone wrong with me." She repeated the same words to herself over and over again. With all the efforts which she had made she could not quite reconcile herself to the two letters which she had written in the book. This coming up to London, and riding in the Park, and going to the theatres, seemed to unsettle her. At home she had schooled herself down into quiesence, and made herself think that she believed that she was satisfied with the prospects of her life. But now she was all astray again, doubting about herself, hankering after something over and beyond that which seemed to be allotted to her,—but, nevertheless, assuring herself that she never would accept of anything else.

I must not, if I can help it, let the reader suppose

that she was softening her heart to John Eames because John Eames was spoken well of in the world. But with all of us, in the opinion which we form of those around us, we take unconsciously the opinion of others. A woman is handsome because the world says so. Music is charming to us because it charms others. We drink our wines with other men's palates, and look at our pictures with other men's eyes. When Lily heard John Eames praised by all around her, it could not be but that she should praise him too,—not out loud, as others did, but in the silence of her heart. And then his constancy to her had been so perfect! If that other one had never come! If it could be that she might begin again, and that she might be spared that episode in her life which had brought him and her together!

"When is Mr. Eames going to be back?" Mrs. Thorne said at dinner one day. On this occasion the squire was dining at Mrs. Thorne's house; and there were three or four others there,—among them a Mr. Harold Smith, who was in Parliament, and his wife, and John Eames's special friend, Sir Raffle Buffle. The question was addressed to the squire, but the squire was slow to answer, and it was taken up by Sir Raffle Buffle.

"He 'll be back on the 15th," said the knight, "unless he means to play truant. I hope he won't do that, as his absence has been a terrible inconvenience to me." Then Sir Raffle explained that John Eames was his private secretary, and that Johnny's journey to the Continent had been made with, and could not have been made without, his sanction. "When I came to hear the story, of course I told him that he must go.

'Eames,' I said, 'take the advice of a man who knows the world. Circumstanced as you are, you are bound to go.' And he went."

"Upon my word, that was very good-natured of you," said Mrs. Thorne.

"I never keep a fellow to his desk who has really got important business elsewhere," said Sir Raffle. "The country, I say, can afford to do as much as that for her servants. But then I like to know that the business is business. One does n't choose to be humbugged."

"I dare say you are humbugged, as you call it, very often," said Harold Smith.

"Perhaps so; perhaps I am; perhaps that is the opinion which they have of me at the Treasury. But you were hardly long enough there, Smith, to have learned much about it, I should say."

"I don't suppose I should have known much about it, as you call it, if I had stayed till Doomsday."

"I dare say not; I dare say not. Men who begin as late as you did, never know what official life really means. Now I 've been at it all my life, and I think I do understand it."

"It 's not a profession I should like unless where it 's joined with politics," said Harold Smith.

"But it 's apt to be so short when they are joined," said Sir Raffle Buffle. Now it had happened once in the life of Mr. Harold Smith that he had been in the ministry, but, unfortunately, that ministry had gone out almost within a week of the time of Mr. Smith's adhesion. Sir Raffle and Mr. Smith had known each other for many years, and were accustomed to make civil little speeches to each other in society.

"I 'd sooner be a horse in a mill than have to go to an office every day," said Mrs. Smith, coming to her husband's assistance. "You, Sir Raffle, have kept yourself fresh and pleasant through it all; but who besides you ever did?"

"I hope I am fresh," said Sir Raffle; "and as for pleasantness, I will leave that for you to determine."

"There can be but one opinion," said Mrs. Thorne.

The conversation had strayed away from John Eames, and Lily was disappointed. It was a pleasure to her when people talked of him in her hearing, and as a question or two had been asked about him, making him the hero of the moment, it seemed to her that he was being robbed of his due when the little amenities between Mr. and Mrs. Harold Smith and Sir Raffle banished his name from the circle. Nothing more, however, was said of him at dinner, and I fear that he would have been altogether forgotten throughout the evening, had not Lily herself referred,—not to him, which she could not possibly have been induced to do,—but to the subject of his journey. "I wonder whether poor Mr. Crawley will be found guilty?" she said to Sir Raffle up in the drawing-room.

"I am afraid he will; I am afraid he will," said Sir Raffle; "and I fear, my dear Miss Dale, that I must go further than that. I fear I must express an opinion that he is guilty."

"Nothing will ever make me think so," said Lily.

"Ladies are always tender-hearted," said Sir Raffle, "and especially young ladies,—and especially pretty young ladies. I do not wonder that such should be your opinion. But you see, Miss Dale, a man of business has to look at these things in a business light.

What I want to know is, where did he get the cheque? He is bound to be explicit in answering that before anybody can acquit him."

"That is just what Mr. Eames has gone abroad to learn."

"It is very well for Eames to go abroad,—though, upon my word, I don't know whether I should not have given him different advice if I had known how much I was to be tormented by his absence. The thing could n't have happened at a more unfortunate time;—the ministry going out, and everything. But, as I was saying, it is all very well for him to do what he can. He is related to them, and is bound to save the honour of his relations if it be possible. I like him for going. I always liked him. As I said to my friend De Guest, 'That young man will make his way.' And I rather fancy that the chance word which I spoke then to my valued old friend was not thrown away in Eames's favour. But, my dear Miss Dale, where did Mr. Crawley get that cheque? That 's what I want to know. If you can tell me that, then I can tell you whether or no he will be acquitted."

Lily did not feel a strong prepossession in favour of Sir Raffle, in spite of his praise of John Eames. The harsh voice of the man annoyed her, and his egotism offended her. When, much later in the evening, his character came on for discussion between herself and Mrs. Thorne and Emily Dunstable, she had not a word to say in his favour. But still she had been pleased to meet him, because he was the man with whom Johnny's life was most specially concerned. I think that a portion of her dislike to him arose from the fact that in continuing the conversation he did not revert

to his private secretary, but preferred to regale her with stories of his own doings in wonderful cases which had partaken of interest similar to that which now attached itself to Mr. Crawley's case. He had known a man who had stolen a hundred pounds and had never been found out; and another man who had been arrested for stealing two-and-sixpence, which was found afterwards sticking to a bit of butter at the bottom of a plate. Mrs. Thorne had heard all this, and had answered him, "Dear me, Sir Raffle," she had said, "what a great many thieves you have had among your acquaintance!" This had rather disconcerted him, and then there had been no more talking about Mr. Crawley.

It had been arranged on this morning that Mr. Dale should return to Allington and leave Lily with Mrs. Thorne. Some special need of his presence at home, real or assumed, had arisen, and he had declared that he must shorten his stay in London by about half the intended period. The need would not have been so pressing, probably, had he not felt that Lily would be more comfortable with Mrs. Thorne than in his lodgings in Sackville Street. Lily had at first declared that she would return with him, but everybody had protested against this. Emily Dunstable had protested against it very stoutly; Mrs. Dale herself had protested against it by letter; and Mrs. Thorne's protest had been quite imperious in its nature.

"Indeed, my dear, you 'll do nothing of the kind. I 'm sure your mother would n't wish it. I look upon it as quite essential that you and Emily should learn to know each other."

"But we do know each other; don't we, Emily?" said Lily.

"Not quite yet," said Emily.

Then Lily had laughed, and so the matter was settled. And now, on this present occasion, Mr. Dale was at Mrs. Thorne's house for the last time. His conscience had been perplexed about Lily's horse, and if anything was to be said it must be said now. The subject was very disagreeable to him, and he was angry with Bernard because Bernard had declined to manage it for him after his own fashion. But he had told himself so often that anything was better than a pecuniary obligation, that he was determined to speak his mind to Mrs. Thorne, and to beg her to allow him to have his way. So he waited till the Harold Smiths were gone, and Sir Raffle Buffle, and then, when Lily was apart with Emily,—for Bernard Dale had left them,—he found himself at last alone with Mrs. Thorne.

"I can't be too much obliged to you," he said, "for your kindness to my girl."

"Oh, laws, that 's nothing," said Mrs. Thorne. "We look on her as one of us now."

"I am sure she is grateful,—very grateful; and so am I. She and Bernard have been brought up so much together, that it is very desirable that she should be not unknown to Bernard's wife."

"Exactly,—that 's just what I mean. Blood 's thicker than water; is n't it? Emily's child, if she has one, will be Lily's cousin."

"Her first cousin once removed," said the squire, who was accurate in these matters. Then he drew himself up in his seat and compressed his lips together,

and prepared himself for his task. It was very disagreeable. Nothing, he thought, could be more disagreeable. "I have a little thing to speak about," he said at last, "which I hope will not offend you."

"About Lily?"

"Yes; about Lily."

"I 'm not very easily offended, and I don't know how I could possibly be offended about her."

"I 'm an old-fashioned man, Mrs. Thorne, and don't know much about the ways of the world. I have always been down in the country, and maybe I have prejudices. You won't refuse to humour one of them, I hope?"

"You 're beginning to frighten me, Mr. Dale; what is it?"

"About Lily's horse."

"Lily's horse! What about her horse? I hope he 's not vicious?"

"She is riding every day with your niece," said the squire, thinking it best to stick to his own point.

"It will do her all the good in the world," said Mrs. Thorne.

"Very likely. I don't doubt it. I do not in the least disapprove her riding. But——"

"But what, Mr. Dale?"

"I should be so much obliged if I might be allowed to pay the livery-stable keeper's bill."

"Oh, laws a' mercy!"

"I dare say it may sound odd, but as I have a fancy about it, I 'm sure you 'll gratify me."

"Of course I will. I 'll remember it. I 'll make it all right with Bernard. Bernard and I have no end of accounts,—or shall have before long,—and we 'll make

an item of it. Then you can arrange with Bernard afterwards."

Mr. Dale as he got up to go away felt that he was beaten, but he did not know how to carry the battle any further on that occasion. He could not take out his purse and put down the cost of the horse on the table. "I will then speak to my nephew about it," he said, very gravely, as he went away. And he did speak to his nephew about it, and even wrote to him more than once. But it was all to no purpose. Mr. Potts could not be induced to give a separate bill, and, —so said Bernard,—swore at last that he would furnish no account to anybody for horses that went to Mrs. Thorne's door except to Mrs. Thorne herself.

That night Lily took leave of her uncle and remained at Mrs. Thorne's house. As things were now arranged she would, no doubt, be in London when John Eames returned. If he should find her in town,—and she told herself that if she was in town he certainly would find her,—he would, doubtless, repeat to her the offer he had so often made before. She never ventured to tell herself that she doubted as to the answer to be made to him. The two words were written in the book, and must remain there. But she felt that she would have had more courage for persistency down at Allington than she would be able to summon to her assistance up in London. She knew she would be weak, should she be found by him alone in Mrs. Thorne's drawing-room. It would be better for her to make some excuse and go home. She was resolved that she would not become his wife. She could not extricate herself from the dominion of a feeling which she believed to be love for another man. She had

given a solemn promise both to her mother and to John Eames that she would not marry that other man; but in doing so she had made a solemn promise to herself that she would not marry John Eames. She had sworn it and would keep her oath. And yet she regretted it! In writing home to her mother the next day, she told Mrs. Dale that all the world was speaking well of John Eames,—that John had won for himself a reputation of his own, and was known far and wide to be a noble fellow. She could not keep herself from praising John Eames, though she knew that such praise might, and would, be used against her at some future time. "Though I cannot love him I will give him his due," she said to herself.

"I wish you would make up your mind to have an 'it' for yourself," Emily Dunstable said to her again that night; "a nice 'it,' so that I could make a friend, perhaps a brother, of him."

"I shall never have an 'it,' if I live to be a hundred," said Lily Dale.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ROTTEN ROW.

Lily had heard nothing as to the difficulty about her horse, and could therefore enjoy her exercise without the drawback of feeling that her uncle was subjected to an annoyance. She was in the habit of going out every day with Bernard and Emily Dunstable, and their party was generally joined by others who would meet them at Mrs. Thorne's house. For Mrs. Thorne was a very hospitable woman, and there were many who liked well enough to go to her house. Late in the afternoon there would be a great congregation of horses before the door,—sometimes as many as a dozen; and then the cavalcade would go off into the Park, and there it would become scattered. As neither Bernard nor Miss Dunstable were unconscionable lovers, Lily in these scatterings did not often find herself neglected or lost. Her cousin would generally remain with her, and as in those days she had no "it" of her own she was well pleased that he should do so.

But it so happened that on a certain afternoon she found herself riding in Rotten Row alone with a certain stout gentleman whom she constantly met at Mrs. Thorne's house. His name was Onesiphorus Dunn, and he was usually called Siph by his intimate friends. It had seemed to Lily that everybody was an

intimate friend of Mr. Dunn's, and she was in daily fear lest she should make a mistake and call him Siph herself. Had she done so it would not have mattered in the least. Mr. Dunn, had he observed it at all, would neither have been flattered nor angry. A great many young ladies about London did call him Siph, and to him it was quite natural that they should do so. He was an Irishman, living on the best of everything in the world, with apparently no fortune of his own, and certainly never earning anything. Everybody liked him, and it was admitted on all sides that there was no safer friend in the world, either for young ladies or young men, than Mr. Onesiphorus Dunn. He did not borrow money, and he did not encroach. He did like being asked out to dinner, and he did think that they to whom he gave the light of his countenance in town owed him the return of a week's run in the country. He neither shot, nor hunted, nor fished, nor read, and yet he was never in the way in any house. He did play billiards, and whist, and croquet—very badly. He was a good judge of wine, and would occasionally condescend to look after the bottling of it on behalf of some very intimate friend. He was a great friend of Mrs. Thorne's, with whom he always spent ten days in the autumn at Chaldicotes.

Bernard and Emily were not insatiable lovers, but, nevertheless, Mrs. Thorne had thought it proper to provide a fourth in the riding parties, and had put Mr. Dunn upon this duty. "Don't bother yourself about it, Siph," she had said; "only if those lovers should go off philandering out of sight, our little country lassie might find herself to be nowhere in the Park." Siph had promised to make himself useful, and had done

so. There had generally been so large a number in their party that the work imposed on Mr. Dunn had been very light. Lily had never found out that he had been especially consigned to her as her own cavalier, but had seen quite enough of him to be aware that he was a pleasant companion. To her, thinking, as she ever was thinking, about Johnny Eames, Siph was much more agreeable than might have been a younger man who would have endeavoured to make her think about himself.

Thus when she found herself riding alone in Rotten Row with Siph Dunn, she was neither disconcerted nor displeased. He had been talking to her about Lord De Guest, whom he had known,—for Siph knew everybody,—and Lily had begun to wonder whether he knew John Eames. She would have liked to hear the opinion of such a man about John Eames. She was making up her mind that she would say something about the Crawley matter,—not intending, of course, to mention John Eames's name,—when suddenly her tongue was paralysed and she could not speak. At that moment they were standing near a corner, where a turning path made an angle in the iron rails, Mr. Dunn having proposed that they should wait there for a few minutes before they returned home, as it was probable that Bernard and Miss Dunstable might come up. They had been there for some five or ten minutes, and Lily had asked her first question about the Crawleys,—inquiring of Mr. Dunn whether he had heard of a terrible accusation which had been made against a clergyman in Barsetshire,—when on a sudden her tongue was paralysed. As they were standing, Lily's horse was turned towards the diverging path,

whereas Mr. Dunn was looking the other way, towards Achilles and Apsley House. Mr. Dunn was nearer to the railings, but though they were thus looking different ways they were so placed that each could see the face of the other. Then, on a sudden, coming slowly towards her along the diverging path and leaning on the arm of another man, she saw,—Adolphus Crosbie.

She had never seen him since a day on which she had parted from him with many kisses,—with warm, pressing, eager kisses,—of which she had been nowhat ashamed. He had then been to her almost as her husband. She had trusted him entirely, and had thrown herself into his arms with a full reliance. There is often much of reticence on the part of a woman towards a man to whom she is engaged, something also of shamefacedness occasionally. There exists a shadow of doubt, at least of that hesitation which shows that in spite of vows the woman knows that a change may come, and that provision for such possible steps backward should always be within her reach. But Lily had cast all such caution to the winds. She had given herself to the man entirely, and had determined that she would sink or swim, stand or fall, live or die, by him and by his truth. He had been as false as hell. She had been in his arms, clinging to him, kissing him, swearing that her only pleasure in the world was to be with him,—with him her treasure, her promised husband; and within a month, a week, he had been false to her. There had come upon her crushing tidings, and she had for days wondered at herself that they had not killed her. But she had lived, and had forgiven him. She had still loved him, and had received new offers from him, which had been an-

swered as the reader knows. But she had never seen him since the day on which she had parted from him at Allington, without a doubt as to his faith. Now he was before her, walking on the footpath, almost within reach of her whip.

He did not recognise her, but as he passed on he did recognise Mr. Onesiphorus Dunn, and stopped to speak to him. Or it might have been that Crosbie's friend, Fowler Pratt, stopped with this special object, —for Siph Dunn was an intimate friend of Fowler Pratt's. Crosbie and Siph were also acquainted, but in those days Crosbie did not care much for stopping his friends in the Park or elsewhere. He had become moody and discontented, and was generally seen going about the world alone. On this special occasion he was having a little special conversation about money with his very old friend Fowler Pratt.

"What, Siph, is this you? You 're always on horseback now," said Fowler Pratt.

"Well, yes; I have gone in a good deal for cavalry work this last month. I 've been lucky enough to have a young lady to ride with me." This he said in a whisper, which the distance of Lily justified. "How d'ye do, Crosbie? One does n't often see you on horseback, or on foot either."

"I 've something to do besides going to look or to be looked at," said Crosbie. Then he raised his eyes and saw Lily's side face, and recognised her. Had he seen her before he had been stopped on his way I think he would have passed on, endeavouring to escape observation. But as it was, his feet had been arrested before he knew of her close vicinity, and now it would seem that he was afraid of her, and was flying from

her, were he at once to walk off, leaving his friend behind him. And he knew that she had seen him, and had recognised him, and was now suffering from his presence. He could not but perceive that it was so from the fixedness of her face, and from the constrained manner in which she gazed before her. His friend Fowler Pratt had never seen Miss Dale, though he knew very much of her history. Siph Dunn knew nothing of the history of Crosbie and his love, and was unaware that he and Lily had ever seen each other. There was thus no help near to extricate her from her difficulty.

"When a man has any work to do in the world," said Siph, "he always boasts of it to his acquaintance, and curses his luck to himself. I have nothing to do, and can go about to see and to be seen;—and I must own that I like it."

"Especially the being seen,—eh, Siph?" said Fowler Pratt. "I also have nothing on earth to do, and I come here every day because it is as easy to do that as to go anywhere else."

Crosbie was still looking at Lily. He could not help himself. He could not take his eyes from off her. He could see that she was as pretty as ever, that she was but very little altered. She was, in truth, somewhat stouter than in the old days, but of that he took no special notice. Should he speak to her? Should he try to catch her eye, and then raise his hat? Should he go up to her horse's head boldly, and ask her to let bygones be bygones? He had an idea that of all courses which he could pursue that was the one which she would approve the best,—which would be most efficacious for him, if with her anything from him

might have any efficacy. But he could not do it. He did not know what words he might best use. Would it become him humbly to sue to her for pardon? Or should he strive to express his unaltered love by some tone of his voice? Or should he simply ask her after her health? He made one step towards her, and he saw that the face became more rigid and more fixed than before, and then he desisted. He told himself that he was simply hateful to her. He thought that he could perceive that there was no tenderness mixed with her unabated anger.

At this moment Bernard Dale and Emily came close upon him, and Bernard saw him at once. It was through Bernard that Lily and Crosbie had come to know each other. He and Bernard Dale had been fast friends in old times, and had, of course, been bitter enemies since the day of Crosbie's treachery. They had never spoken since, though they had often seen each other, and Dale was not at all disposed to speak to him now. The moment that he recognised Crosbie he looked across to his cousin. For an instant, an idea had flashed across him that he was there by her permission,—with her assent; but it required no second glance to show him that this was not the case.

"Dunn," he said, "I think we will ride on," and he put his horse into a trot. Siph, whose ear was very accurate, and who knew at once that something was wrong, trotted on with him, and Lily, of course, was not left behind.

"Is there anything the matter?" said Emily to her lover.

"Nothing specially the matter," he replied; "but

you were standing in company with the greatest blackguard that ever lived, and I thought we had better change our ground."

"Bernard!" said Lily, flashing on him with all the fire which her eyes could command. Then she remembered that she could not reprimand him for the offence of such abuse in such company; so she reined in her horse and fell a-weeping.

Siph Dunn, with his wicked cleverness, knew the whole story at once, remembering that he had once heard something of Crosbie having behaved very ill to some one before he married Lady Alexandrina De Courcy. He stopped his horse also, falling a little behind Lily, so that he might not be supposed to have seen her tears, and began to hum a tune. Emily also, though not wickedly clever, understood something of it. "If Bernard says anything to make you angry, I will scold him," she said. Then the two girls rode on together in front, while Bernard fell back with Siph Dunn.

"Pratt," said Crosbie, putting his hand on his friend's shoulder as soon as the party had ridden out of hearing, "do you see that girl there in the dark blue habit?"

"What, the one nearest to the path?"

"Yes; the one nearest to the path. That is Lily Dale."

"Lily Dale!" said Fowler Pratt.

"Yes; that is Lily Dale."

"Did you speak to her?" Pratt asked.

"No; she gave me no chance. She was there but a moment. But it was herself. It seems so odd to me that I should have been thus so near her again."

If there was any man to whom Crosbie could have spoken freely about Lily Dale it was this man, Fowler Pratt. Pratt was the oldest friend he had in the world, and it happened that when he first woke to the misery that he had prepared for himself in throwing over Lily and betrothing himself to his late wife, Pratt had been the first person to whom he had communicated his sorrow. Not that he had ever been really open in his communications. It is not given to such men as Crosbie to speak openly of themselves to their friends. Nor, indeed, was Fowler Pratt one who was fond of listening to such tales. He had no such tales to tell of himself, and he thought that men and women should go through the world quietly, not subjecting themselves or their acquaintances to anxieties and emotions from peculiar conduct. But he was conscientious, and courageous also as well as prudent, and he had dared to tell Crosbie that he was behaving very badly. He had spoken his mind plainly, and had then given all the assistance in his power.

He paused a moment before he replied, weighing, like a prudent man, the force of the words he was about to utter. "It is much better as it is," he said. "It is much better that you should be as strangers for the future."

"I do not see that at all," said Crosbie. They were both leaning on the rails, and so they remained for the next twenty minutes. "I do not see that at all."

"I feel sure of it. What could come of any renewed intercourse,—even if she would allow it?"

"I might make her my wife."

"And do you think that you would be happy with her, or she with you, after what has passed?"

"I do think so."

"I do not. It might be possible that she should bring herself to marry you. Women delight to forgive injuries. They like the excitement of generosity. But she could never forget that you had had a former wife, or the circumstances under which you were married. And as for yourself, you would regret it after the first month. How could you ever speak to her of your love without speaking also of your shame? If a man does marry he should at least be able to hold up his head before his wife."

This was very severe, but Crosbie showed no anger. "I think I should do so," he said,—"after a while."

"And then, about money? Of course you would have to tell her everything."

"Everything—of course."

"It is like enough that she might not regard that,—except that she would feel that if you could not afford to marry her when you were unembarrassed, you can hardly afford to do so when you are over head and ears in debt."

"She has money now."

"After all that has come and gone you would hardly seek Lily Dale because you want to marry a fortune."

"You are too hard on me, Pratt. You know that my only reason for seeking her is that I love her."

"I do not mean to be hard. But I have a very strong opinion that the quarrels of lovers, when they are of so very serious a nature, are a bad basis for the renewal of love. Come, let us go and dress for dinner. I am going to dine with Mrs. Thorne, the millionaire, who married a country doctor, and who used to be called Miss Dunstable."

"I never dine out anywhere now," said Crosbie. And then they walked out of the Park together. Neither of them, of course, knew that Lily Dale was staying at the house at which Fowler Pratt was going to dine.

Lily, as she rode home, did not speak a word. She would have given worlds to be able to talk, but she could not even make a beginning. She heard Bernard and Siph Dunn chatting behind her, and hoped that they would continue to do so till she was safe within the house. They all used her well, for no one tried to draw her into conversation. Once Emily said to her, "Shall we trot a little, Lily?" And then they had moved on quickly, and the misery was soon over. As soon as she was upstairs in the house, she got Emily by herself, and explained all the mystery in a word or two. "I fear I have made a fool of myself. That was the man to whom I was once engaged." "What, Mr. Crosbie?" said Emily, who had heard the whole story from Bernard. "Yes, Mr. Crosbie; pray do not say a word of it to anybody,—not even to your aunt. I am better now, but I was such a fool. No, dear; I won't go into the drawing-room. I 'll go upstairs, and come down ready for dinner."

When she was alone she sat down in her habit, and declared to herself that she certainly would never become the wife of Mr. Crosbie. I do not know why she should make such a declaration. She had promised her mother and John Eames that she would not do so, and that promise would certainly have bound her without any further resolutions on her own part. But, to tell the truth, the vision of the man had disenchanted her. When last she had seen him he had been as it

were a god to her; and though, since that day, his conduct to her had been as ungodlike as it well might be, still the memory of the outward signs of his divinity had remained with her. It is difficult to explain how it had come to pass that the glimpse which she had had of him should have altered so much within her mind;—why she should so suddenly have come to regard him in an altered light. It was not simply that he looked to be older, and because his face was careworn. It was not only that he had lost that look of an Apollo which Lily had once in her mirth attributed to him. I think it was chiefly that she herself was older, and could no longer see a god in such a man. She had never regarded John Eames as being gifted with divinity, and had therefore always been making comparisons to his discredit. Any such comparison now would tend quite the other way. Nevertheless she would adhere to the two words in her book. Since she had seen Mr. Crosbie she was altogether out of love with the prospect of matrimony.

She was in the room when Mr. Pratt was announced, and she at once recognised him as the man who had been with Crosbie. And when, some minutes afterwards, Siph Dunn came into the room, she could see that in their greeting allusion was made to the scene in the Park. But still it was probable that this man would not recognise her, and, if he did so, what would it matter? There were twenty people to sit down to dinner, and the chances were that she would not be called upon to exchange a word with Mr. Pratt. She had now recovered herself, and could speak freely to her friend Siph, and when Siph came and stood near her she thanked him graciously for his escort in the

Park. "If it was n't for you, Mr. Dunn, I really think I should not get any riding at all. Bernard and Miss Dunstable have only one thing to think about, and certainly I am not that one thing." She thought it probable that if she could keep Siph close to her, Mrs. Thorne, who always managed those things herself, might apportion her out to be led to dinner by her good-natured friend. But the fates were averse. The time had now come, and Lily was waiting her turn. "Mr. Fowler Pratt, let me introduce you to Miss Lily Dale," said Mrs. Thorne. Lily could perceive that Mr. Pratt was startled. The sign he gave was the least possible sign in the world; but still it sufficed for Lily to perceive it. She put her hand upon his arm, and walked down with him to the dining-room without giving him the slightest cause to suppose that she knew who he was.

"I think I saw you in the Park riding?" said he.

"Yes, I was there; we go nearly every day."

"I never ride; I was walking."

"It seems to me that the people don't go there to walk, but to stand still," said Lily. "I cannot understand how so many people can bear to loiter about it in that way—leaning on the rails and doing nothing."

"It is about as good as the riding, and costs less money. That is all that can be said for it. Do you live chiefly in town?"

"Oh dear, no; I live altogether in the country. I 'm only up here because a cousin is going to be married."

"Captain Dale, you mean—to Miss Dunstable?" said Fowler Pratt.

"When they have been joined together in holy

matrimony, I shall go down to the country, and never, I suppose, come up to London again."

"You do not like London?"

"Not as a residence, I think," said Lily. "But of course one's likings and dislikings on such a matter depend on circumstances. I live with my mother, and all my relations live near us. Of course I like the country best, because they are there."

"Young ladies so often have a different way of looking at this subject. I should n't wonder if Miss Dunstable's views about it were altogether of another sort. Young ladies generally expect to be taken away from their fathers and mothers, and uncles and aunts."

"But you see I expect to be left with mine," said Lily. After that she turned as much away from Mr. Fowler Pratt as she could, having taken an aversion to him. What business had he to talk to her about being taken away from her uncles and aunts? She had seen him with Mr. Crosbie, and it might be possible that they were intimate friends. It might be that Mr. Pratt was asking questions in Mr. Crosbie's interest. Let that be as it might, she would answer no more questions from him further than ordinary good breeding should require of her.

"She is a nice girl, certainly," said Fowler Pratt to himself, as he walked home, "and I have no doubt would make a good, ordinary, everyday wife. But she is not such a paragon that a man should condescend to grovel in the dirt for her."

That night Lily told Emily Dunstable the whole of Mr. Crosbie's history as far as she knew it, and also explained her new aversion to Mr. Fowler Pratt. "They are very great friends," said Emily. "Bernard

has told me so; and you may be sure that Mr. Pratt knew the whole history before he came here. I am so sorry that my aunt asked him."

"It does not signify in the least," said Lily. "Even if I were to meet Mr. Crosbie I don't think I should make such a fool of myself again. As it is, I can only hope he did not see it."

"I am sure he did not."

Then there was a pause, during which Lily sat with her face resting on both her hands. "It is wonderful how much he is altered," she said at last.

"Think how much he has suffered."

"I suppose I am altered as much, only I do not see it in myself."

"I don't know what you were, but I don't think you can have changed much. You no doubt have suffered too, but not as he has done."

"Oh, as for that, I have done very well. I think I 'll go to bed now. The riding makes me so sleepy."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CLERICAL COMMISSION.

It was at last arranged that the five clergymen selected should meet at Dr. Tempest's house in Silverbridge to make inquiry and report to the bishop whether the circumstances connected with the cheque for twenty pounds were of such a nature as to make it incumbent on him to institute proceedings against Mr. Crawley in the Court of Arches. Dr. Tempest had acted upon the letter which he had received from the bishop, exactly as though there had been no meeting at the palace, no quarrel to the death between him and Mrs. Proudie. He was a prudent man, gifted with the great power of holding his tongue, and had not spoken a word, even to his wife, of what had occurred. After such a victory our old friend the archdeacon would have blown his own trumpet loudly among his friends. Plumstead would have heard of it instantly, and the pæan would have been sung out in the neighbouring parishes of Eiderdown, Stogpingum, and St. Ewold's. The High Street of Barchester would have known of it, and the very bedesmen in Hiram's Hospital would have told among themselves the terrible discomfiture of the bishop and his lady. But Dr. Tempest spoke no word of it to anybody. He wrote letters to the two clergymen named by the bishop, and himself selected two others out of his own rural deanery, and suggested to

them all a day at which a preliminary meeting should be held at his own house. The two who were invited by him were Mr. Oriel, the rector of Greshamsbury, and Mr. Robarts, the vicar of Framley. They all assented to the proposition, and on the day named assembled themselves at Silverbridge.

It was now April, and the judges were to come into Barchester before the end of the month. What, then, could be the use of this ecclesiastical inquiry exactly at the same time? Men and women declared that it was a double prosecution, and that a double prosecution for the same offence was a course of action opposed to the feelings and traditions of the country. Miss Anne Prettyman went so far as to say that it was unconstitutional, and Mary Walker declared that no human being except Mrs. Proudie would ever have been guilty of such cruelty. "Don't tell me about the bishop, John," she said; "the bishop is a cipher." "You may be sure Dr. Tempest would not have a hand in it if it were not right," said John Walker. "My dear Mr. John," said Miss Anne Prettyman, "Dr. Tempest is as hard as a bar of iron, and always was. But I am surprised that Mr. Robarts should take a part in it."

In the mean time, at the palace, Mrs. Proudie had been reduced to learn what was going on from Mr. Thumble. The bishop had never spoken a word to her respecting Mr. Crawley since that terrible day on which Dr. Tempest had witnessed his imbecility,—having absolutely declined to answer when his wife had mentioned the subject. "You won't speak to me about it, my dear?" she had said to him, when he had thus declined, remonstrating more in sorrow than

in anger. "No; I won't," the bishop had replied; "there has been a great deal too much talking about it. It has broken my heart already, I know." These were very bad days in the palace. Mrs. Proudie affected to be satisfied with what was being done. She talked to Mr. Thumble about Mr. Crawley and the cheque, as though everything were arranged quite to her satisfaction,—as though everything, indeed, had been arranged by herself. But everybody about the house could see that the manner of the woman was altogether altered. She was milder than usual with the servants and was almost too gentle in her usage of her husband. It seemed as though something had happened to frighten her and break her spirit, and it was whispered about through the palace that she was afraid that the bishop was dying. As for him, he hardly left his own sitting-room in these days, except when he joined the family at breakfast and at dinner. And in his study he did little or nothing. He would smile when his chaplain went to him, and give some trifling verbal directions; but for days he scarcely ever took a pen in his hands, and though he took up many a book, he read hardly a page. How often he told his wife in those days that he was broken-hearted, no one but his wife ever knew.

"What has happened that you should speak like that?" she said to him once. "What has broken your heart?"

"You," he replied. "You; you have done it."

"Oh, Tom," she said, going back into the memory of very far distant days in her nomenclature, "how can you speak to me so cruelly as that! That it should come to that between you and me!"

"Why did you not go away and leave me that day when I told you?"

"Did you ever know a woman who liked to be turned out of a room in her own house?" said Mrs. Proudie. When Mrs. Proudie had condescended so far as this, it must be admitted that in those days there was great trouble in the palace.

Mr. Thumble, on the day before he went to Silverbridge, asked for an audience with the bishop in order that he might receive instructions. He had been strictly desired to do this by Mrs. Proudie, and had not dared to disobey her injunctions,—thinking, however, himself, that his doing so was inexpedient. "I have got nothing to say to you about it; not a word," said the bishop crossly. "I thought that perhaps you might like to see me before I started," pleaded Mr. Thumble very humbly. "I don't want to see you at all," said the bishop; "you are going there to exercise your own judgment,—if you have got any; and you ought not to come to me." After that Mr. Thumble began to think that Mrs. Proudie was right, and that the bishop was near his dissolution.

Mr. Thumble and Mr. Quiverful went over to Silverbridge together in a gig, hired from the Dragon of Wantly—as to the cost of which there arose among them a not unnatural apprehension which amounted at last almost to dismay. "I don't mind it so much for once," said Mr. Quiverful, "but if many such meetings are necessary, I for one can't afford it, and I won't do it. A man with my family can't allow himself to be money out of pocket in that way." "It is hard," said Mr. Thumble. "She ought to pay it herself, out of her own pocket," said Mr. Quiverful. He had had

concerns with the palace when Mrs. Proudie was in the full swing of her dominion, and had not as yet begun to suspect that there might possibly be a change.

Mr. Oriel and Mr. Robarts were already sitting with Dr. Tempest when the other two clergymen were shown into the room. When the first greetings were over luncheon was announced, and while they were eating not a word was said about Mr. Crawley. The ladies of the family were not present, and the five clergymen sat round the table alone. It would have been difficult to have got together five gentlemen less likely to act with one mind and one spirit;—and perhaps it was all the better for Mr. Crawley that it should be so. Dr. Tempest himself was a man peculiarly capable of exercising the functions of a judge in such a matter, had he sat alone as a judge: but he was one who would be almost sure to differ from others who sat as equal assessors with him. Mr. Oriel was a gentleman at all points; but he was very shy, very reticent, and altogether uninstructed in the ordinary daily intercourse of man with man. Any one knowing him might have predicted of him that he would be sure on such an occasion as this to be found floundering in a sea of doubts. Mr. Quiverful was the father of a large family, whose whole life had been devoted to fighting a cruel world on behalf of his wife and children. That fight he had fought bravely; but it had left him no energy for any other business. Mr. Thumble was a poor creature,—so poor a creature that, in spite of a small restless ambition to be doing something, he was almost cowed by the hard lines of Dr. Tempest's brow. The Rev. Mark Robarts was a man of the world, and a clever fellow, and did not stand in awe of anybody,

—unless it might be, in a very moderate degree, of his patrons the Luftons, whom he was bound to respect; but his cleverness was not the cleverness needed by a judge. He was essentially a partisan, and would be sure to vote against the bishop in such a matter as this now before him. There was a palace faction in the diocese, and an anti-palace faction. Mr. Thumble and Mr. Quiverful belonged to one, and Mr. Oriel and Mr. Robarts to the other. Mr. Thumble was too weak to stick to his faction against the strength of such a man as Dr. Tempest. Mr. Quiverful would be too indifferent to do so,—unless his interest were concerned. Mr. Oriel would be too conscientious to regard his own side on such an occasion as this. But Mark Robarts would be sure to support his friends and oppose his enemies, let the case be what it might. "Now, gentlemen, if you please, we will go into the other room," said Dr. Tempest. They went into the other room, and there they found five chairs arranged for them round the table. Not a word had as yet been said about Mr. Crawley, and no one of the four strangers knew whether Mr. Crawley was to appear before them on that day or not.

"Gentlemen," said Dr. Tempest, seating himself at once in an arm-chair placed at the middle of the table, "I think it will be well to explain to you at first what, as I regard the matter, is the extent of the work which we are called upon to perform. It is of its nature very disagreeable. It cannot but be so, let it be ever so limited. Here is a brother clergyman and a gentleman, living among us, and doing his duty, as we are told, in a most exemplary manner; and suddenly we hear that he is accused of a theft. The matter is

brought before the magistrates, of whom I myself was one, and he was committed for trial. There is, therefore, primâ facie evidence of his guilt. But I do not think that we need go into the question of his guilt at all." When he said this the other four all looked up at him in astonishment. "I thought that we had been summoned here for that purpose," said Mr. Robarts. "Not at all, as I take it," said the doctor. "Were we to commence any such inquiry, the jury would have given their verdict before we could come to any conclusion; and it would be impossible for us to oppose that verdict, whether it declares this unfortunate gentleman to be innocent or to be guilty. If the jury shall say that he is innocent, there is an end of the matter altogether. He would go back to his parish amidst the sympathy and congratulations of his friends. That is what we should all wish."

"Of course it is," said Mr. Robarts. They all declared that was their desire, as a matter of course; and Mr. Thumble said it louder than any one else.

"But if he be found guilty, then will come that difficulty to the bishop, in which we are bound to give him any assistance within our power."

"Of course we are," said Mr. Thumble, who, having heard his own voice once, and having liked the sound, thought that he might creep into a little importance by using it on any occasion that opened itself for him.

"If you will allow me, sir, I will venture to state my views as shortly as I can," said Dr. Tempest. "That may perhaps be the most expeditious course for us all in the end."

"Oh, certainly," said Mr. Thumble. "I did n't mean to interrupt."

"In the case of his being found guilty," continued the doctor, "there will arise the question whether the punishment awarded to him by the judge should suffice for ecclesiastical purposes. Suppose, for instance, that he should be imprisoned for two months, should he be allowed to return to his living at the expiration of that term?"

"I think he ought," said Mr. Robarts;—"considering all things."

"I don't see why he should n't," said Mr. Quiverful.

Mr. Oriel sat listening patiently, and Mr. Thumble looked up to the doctor, expecting to hear some opinion expressed by him with which he might coincide.

"There certainly are reasons why he should not," said Dr. Tempest; "though I by no means say that those reasons are conclusive in the present case. In the first place, a man who has stolen money can hardly be a fitting person to teach others not to steal."

"You must look to the circumstances," said Robarts.

"Yes, that is true; but just bear with me a moment. It cannot, at any rate, be thought that a clergyman should come out of prison and go to his living without any notice from his bishop, simply because he has already been punished under the common law. If this were so, a clergyman might be fined ten days running for being drunk in the street,—five shillings each time,—and at the end of that time might set his bishop at defiance. When a clergyman has shown himself to be utterly unfit for clerical duties, he must not be held to be protected from ecclesiastical censure or from deprivation by the action of the common law."

"But Mr. Crawley has not shown himself to be unfit," said Robarts.

"That is begging the question, Robarts," said the doctor.

"Just so," said Mr. Thumble. Then Mr. Robarts gave a look at Mr. Thumble, and Mr. Thumble retired into his shoes.

"That is the question as to which we are called upon to advise the bishop," continued Dr. Tempest. "And I must say that I think the bishop is right. If he were to allow the matter to pass by without notice, —that is to say, in the event of Mr. Crawley being pronounced to be guilty by a jury,—he would, I think, neglect his duty. Now, I have been informed that the bishop has recommended Mr. Crawley to desist from his duties till the trial be over, and that Mr. Crawley has declined to take the bishop's advice."

"That is true," said Mr. Thumble. "He altogether disregarded the bishop."

"I cannot say that I think he was wrong," said Dr. Tempest.

"I think he was quite right," said Mr. Robarts.

"A bishop in almost all cases is entitled to the obedience of his clergy," said Mr. Oriel.

"I must say that I agree with you, sir," said Mr. Thumble.

"The income is not large, and I suppose that it would have gone with the duties," said Mr. Quiverful. "It is very hard for a man with a family to live when his income has been stopped."

"Be that as it may," continued the doctor, "the bishop feels that it may be his duty to oppose the return of Mr. Crawley to his pulpit, and that he can oppose it in no other way than by proceeding against Mr. Crawley under the Clerical Offences Act. I pro-

pose, therefore, that we should invite Mr. Crawley to attend here——"

"Mr. Crawley is not coming here to-day, then?" said Mr. Robarts.

"I thought it useless to ask for his attendance until we had settled on our course of action," said Dr. Tempest. "If we are all agreed, I will beg him to come here on this day week, when we will meet again. And we will then ask him whether he will submit himself to the bishop's decision, in the event of the jury finding him guilty. If he should decline to do so, we can only then form our opinion as to what will be the bishop's duty by reference to the facts as they are elicited at the trial. If Mr. Crawley should choose to make to us any statement as to his own case, of course we shall be willing to receive it. That is my idea of what had better be done; and now, if any gentleman has any other proposition to make, of course we shall be pleased to hear him." Dr. Tempest, as he said this, looked round upon his companions, as though his pleasure, under the circumstances suggested by himself, would be very doubtful.

"I don't suppose we can do anything better," said Mr. Robarts. "I think it a pity, however, that any steps should have been taken by the bishop before the trial."

"The bishop has been placed in a very delicate position," said Mr. Thumble, pleading for his patron.

"I don't know the meaning of the word 'delicate,'" said Robarts. "I think his duty was very clear, to avoid interference whilst the matter is, so to say, before the judge."

"Nobody has anything else to propose?" said Dr.

Tempest. "Then I will write to Mr. Crawley, and you, gentlemen, will perhaps do me the honour of meeting me here at one o'clock on this day week." Then the meeting was over, and the four clergymen having shaken hands with Dr. Tempest in the hall, all promised that they would return on that day week. So far, Dr. Tempest had carried his point exactly as he might have done had the four gentlemen been represented by the chairs on which they had sat.

"I shan't come again, all the same, unless I know where I 'm to get my expenses," said Mr. Quiverful, as he got into the gig.

"I shall come," said Mr. Thumble, "because I think it a duty. Of course it is a hardship." Mr. Thumble liked the idea of being joined with such men as Dr. Tempest, and Mr. Oriel, and Mr. Robarts, and would any day have paid the expense of a gig from Barchester to Silverbridge out of his own pocket, for the sake of sitting with such benchfellows on any clerical inquiry.

"One's first duty is to one's own wife and family," said Mr. Quiverful.

"Well, yes; in a way, of course, that is quite true, Mr. Quiverful; and when we know how very inadequate are the incomes of the working clergy, we cannot but feel ourselves to be, if I may so say, put upon, when we have to defray the expenses incidental to special duties out of our own pockets. I think, you know,—I don't mind saying this to you,—that the palace should have provided us with a chaise and pair." This was ungrateful on the part of Mr. Thumble, who had been permitted to ride miles upon miles to various outlying clerical duties upon the bishop's

worn-out cob. "You see," continued Mr. Thumble, "you and I go specially to represent the palace, and the palace ought to remember that. I think there ought to have been a chaise and pair; I do indeed."

"I don't care much what the conveyance is," said Quiverful; "but I certainly shall pay nothing more out of my own pocket;—certainly I shall not."

"The result will be that the palace will be thrown over if they don't take care," said Mr. Thumble. "Tempest, however, seems to be pretty steady. Tempest, I think, is steady. You see he is getting tired of parish work, and would like to go into the close. That 's what he is looking for. Did you ever see such a fellow as that Robarts,—just look at him;—quite indecent, was n't he? He thinks he can have his own way in everything, just because his sister married a lord. I do hate to see all that meanness."

Mark Robarts and Caleb Oriel left Silverbridge in another gig by the same road, and soon passed their brethren, as Mr. Robarts was in the habit of driving a large, quick-stepping horse. The last remarks were being made as the dust from the vicar of Framley's wheels saluted the faces of the two slower clergymen. Mr. Oriel had promised to dine and sleep at Framley, and therefore returned in Mr. Robarts's gig.

"Quite unnecessary, all this fuss; don't you think so?" said Mr. Robarts.

"I am not quite sure," said Mr. Oriel. "I can understand that the bishop may have found a difficulty."

"The bishop, indeed! The bishop does n't care two straws about it. It 's Mrs. Proudie! She has put her finger on the poor man's neck because he has not put his neck beneath her feet; and now she thinks she can

crush him,—as she would you or me, if it were in her power. That 's about the long and the short of the bishop's solicitude."

"You are very hard on him," said Mr. Oriel.

"I know him;—and am not at all hard on him. She is hard upon him if you like. Tempest is fair. He is very fair, and as long as no one meddles with him he won't do amiss. I can't hold my tongue always, but I often know that it is better that I should."

Dr. Tempest said not a word to any one on the subject, not even in his own defence. And yet he was sorely tempted. On the very day of the meeting he dined at Mr. Walker's in Silverbridge, and there submitted to be talked at by all the ladies and most of the gentlemen present, without saying a word in his own defence. And yet a word or two would have been so easy and so conclusive.

"Oh, Dr. Tempest," said Mary Walker, "I am so sorry that you have joined the bishop."

"Are you, my dear?" said he. "It is generally thought well that a parish clergyman should agree with his bishop."

"But you know, Dr. Tempest, that you don't agree with your bishop generally."

"Then it is the more fortunate that I shall be able to agree with him on this occasion."

Major Grantly was present at the dinner, and ventured to ask the doctor in the course of the evening what he thought would be done. "I should not venture to ask such a question, Dr. Tempest," he said, "unless I had the strongest possible reason to justify my anxiety."

"I don't know that I can tell you anything, Major

Grantly," said the doctor. "We did not even see Mr. Crawley to-day. But the real truth is that he must stand or fall as the jury shall find him guilty or not guilty. It would be the same in any profession. Could a captain in the army hold up his head in his regiment after he had been tried and found guilty of stealing twenty pounds?"

"I don't think he could," said the major.

"Neither can a clergyman," said the doctor. "The bishop can neither make him nor mar him. It is the jury that must do it."

CHAPTER XXVI.

FRAMLEY PARSONAGE.

At this time Grace Crawley was at Framley Parsonage. Old Lady Lufton's strategy had been quite intelligible, but some people said that in point of etiquette and judgment and moral conduct it was indefensible. Her vicar, Mr. Robarts, had been selected to be one of the clergymen who was to sit in ecclesiastical judgment upon Mr. Crawley, and while he was so sitting Mr. Crawley's daughter was staying in Mr. Robarts's house as a visitor with his wife! It might be that there was no harm in this. Lady Lufton, when the apparent impropriety was pointed out to her by no less a person than Archdeacon Grantly, ridiculed the idea. "My dear archdeacon," Lady Lufton had said, "we all know the bishop to be such a fool and the bishop's wife to be such a knave, that we cannot allow ourselves to be governed in this matter by ordinary rules. Do you not think that it is expedient to show how utterly we disregard his judgment and her malice?" The archdeacon had hesitated much before he spoke to Lady Lufton, whether he should address himself to her or to Mr. Robarts,—or, indeed, to Mrs. Robarts. But he had become aware that the proposition as to the visit had originated with Lady Lufton, and he had therefore decided on speaking to her. He had not condescended to say a word as to his son, nor

would he so condescend. Nor could he go from Lady Lufton to Mr. Robarts, having once failed with her ladyship. Indeed, in giving him his due, we must acknowledge that his disapprobation of Lady Lufton's strategy arose rather from his true conviction as to its impropriety, than from any fear lest this attention paid to Miss Crawley should tend to bring about her marriage with his son. By this time he hated the very name of Crawley. He hated it the more because in hating it he had to put himself for the time on the same side with Mrs. Proudie. But for all that he would not condescend to any unworthy mode of fighting. He thought it wrong that the young lady should be invited to Framley Parsonage at this moment, and he said so to the person who had, as he thought, in truth, given the invitation; but he would not allow his own personal motives to induce him to carry on the argument with Lady Lufton. "The bishop is a fool," he said, "and the bishop's wife is a knave. Nevertheless I would not have had the young lady over to Framley at this moment. If, however, you think it right and Robarts thinks it right, there is an end of it."

"Upon my word we do," said Lady Lufton.

"I am induced to think that Mr. Robarts was not quite confident of the expediency of what he was doing by the way in which he mentioned to Mr. Oriel the fact of Miss Crawley's presence at the parsonage as he drove that gentleman home in his gig. They had been talking about Mr. Crawley when he suddenly turned himself round, so that he could look at his companion, and said, "Miss Crawley is staying with us at the parsonage at the present moment."

"What! Mr. Crawley's daughter?" said Mr. Oriel,

showing plainly by his voice that the tidings had much surprised him.

"Yes; Mr. Crawley's daughter."

"Oh, indeed! I did not know that you were on those terms with the family."

"We have known them for the last seven or eight years," said Mark; "and though I should be giving you a false notion if I were to say that I myself have known them intimately,—for Crawley is a man whom it is quite impossible to know intimately,—yet the womankind at Framley have known them. My sister stayed with them over at Hogglestock for some time."

"What; Lady Lufton?"

"Yes; my sister Lucy. It was just before her marriage. There was a lot of trouble, and the Crawleys were all ill, and she went to nurse them. And then the old lady took them up, and altogether there came to be a sort of feeling that they were to be regarded as friends. They are always in trouble, and now in this special trouble the women between them have thought it best to have the girl over at Framley. Of course I had a kind of feeling about this commission; but as I knew that it would make no difference with me I did not think it necessary to put my veto upon the visit." Mr. Oriel said nothing further, but Mark Robarts was aware that Mr. Oriel did not quite approve of the visit.

That morning old Lady Lufton herself had come across to the parsonage with the express view of bidding all the parsonage party to come across to the hall to dine. "You can tell Mr. Oriel, Fanny, with Lucy's compliments, how delighted she will be to see him." Old Lady Lufton always spoke of her daughter-in-law

as the mistress of the house. "If you think he is particular, you know, we will send a note across." Mrs. Robarts said that she supposed Mr. Oriel would not be particular, but, looking at Grace, made some faint excuse. "You must come, my dear," said Lady Lufton. "Lucy wishes it particularly." Mrs. Robarts did not know how to say that she would not come; and so the matter stood,—when Mrs. Robarts was called upon to leave the room for a moment, and Lady Lufton and Grace were left aone.

"Dear Lady Lufton," said Grace, getting up suddenly from her chair; "will you do me a favour,—a great favour?" She spoke with an energy which quite surprised the old lady, and caused her almost to start from her seat.

"I don't like making promises," said Lady Lufton; "but anything I can do with propriety I will."

"You can do this. Pray let me stay here to-day. You don't understand how I feel about going out while papa is in this way. I know how kind and how good you all are; and when dear Mrs. Robarts asked me here, and mamma said that I had better come, I could not refuse. But indeed, indeed, I had rather not go out to a dinner-party."

"It is not a party, my dear girl," said Lady Lufton, with the kindest voice which she knew how to assume. "And you must remember that my daughter-in-law regards you as so very old a friend! You remember, of course, when she was staying over at Hogglestock?"

"Indeed I do. I remember it well."

"And therefore you should not regard it as going out. There will be nobody there but ourselves and the people from this house."

"But it will be going out, Lady Lufton; and I do hope you will let me stay here. You cannot think how I feel it. Of course I cannot go without something like dressing, and—and—and—— In poor papa's state I feel that I ought not to do anything that looks like gaiety. I ought never to forget it;—not for a moment."

There was a tear in Lady Lufton's eye as she said, "My dear, you shan't come. You and Fanny shall stop and dine here by yourselves. The gentlemen shall come."

"Do let Mrs. Robarts go, please," said Grace.

"I won't do anything of the kind," said Lady Lufton. Then, when Mrs. Robarts returned to the room, her ladyship explained it all in two words. "Whilst you have been away, my dear, Grace has begged off, and therefore we have decided that Mr. Oriel and Mr. Robarts shall come without you."

"I am so sorry, Mrs. Robarts," said Grace.

"Pooh, pooh," said Lady Lufton. "Fanny and I have known each other quite long enough not to stand on any compliments,—have n't we, my dear? I must get home now, as all the morning has gone by. Fanny, my dear, I want to speak to you." Then she expressed her opinion of Grace Crawley as she walked across the parsonage garden with Mrs. Robarts. "She is a very nice girl, and a very good girl, I am sure; and she shows excellent feeling. Whatever happens we must take care of her. And, Fanny, have you observed how handsome she is?"

"We think her very pretty."

"She is more than pretty when she has a little fire in her eyes. She is downright handsome,—or will be

when she fills out a little. I tell you what, my dear; she 'll make havoc with somebody yet; you see if she does n't. Bye-bye. Tell the two gentlemen to be up by seven punctually." And then Lady Lufton went home.

Grace so contrived that Mr. Oriel came and went without seeing her. There was a separate nursery breakfast at the parsonage, and by special permission Grace was allowed to have her tea and bread-and-butter on the next morning with the children. "I thought you told me Miss Crawley was here," said Mr. Oriel, as the two clergymen stood waiting for the gig that was to take the visitor away to Barchester.

"So she is," said Robarts; "but she likes to hide herself, because of her father's trouble. You can't blame her."

"No, indeed," said Mr. Oriel.

"Poor girl! If you knew her you would not only pity her, but like her."

"Is she,—what you call——?"

"You mean, is she a lady?"

"Of course she is by birth, and all that," said Mr. Oriel, apologising for his inquiry.

"I don't think there is another girl in the county so well educated," said Mr. Robarts.

"Indeed! I had no idea of that."

"And we think her a great beauty. As for manners, I never saw a girl with a prettier way of her own."

"Dear me," said Mr. Oriel. "I wish she had come down to breakfast."

It will have been perceived that old Lady Lufton had heard nothing of Major Grantly's offence; that she had no knowledge that Grace had already made

havoc, as she had called it,—had, in truth, made very sad havoc, at Plumstead. She did not, therefore, think much about it when her son told her upon her return home from the parsonage on that afternoon that Major Grantly had come over from Cosby Lodge, and that he was going to dine and sleep at Framley Court. Some slight idea of thankfulness came across her mind that she had not betrayed Grace Crawley into a meeting with a stranger. "I asked him to come some day before we went up to town," said his lordship; "and I am glad he has come -day, as two clergymen to one's self are, at any rate, one too many." So Major Grantly dined and slept at the Court.

But Mrs. Robarts was in a great flurry when she was told of this by her husband on his return from the dinner. Mrs. Crawley had found an opportunity of telling the story of Major Grantly's love to Mrs. Robarts before she had sent her daughter to Framley, knowing that the families were intimate, and thinking it right that there should be some precaution.

"I wonder whether he will come up here?" Mrs. Robarts had said.

"Probably not," said the vicar. "He said he was going home early."

"I hope he will not come,—for Grace's sake," said Mrs. Robarts. She hesitated whether she should tell her husband. She always did tell him everything. But on this occasion she thought she had no right to do so, and she kept the secret. "Don't do anything to bring him up, dear."

"You need n't be afraid. He won't come," said the vicar. On the following morning, as soon as Mr. Oriel was gone, Mr. Robarts went out,—about his parish he

would probably have called it; but in half an hour he might have been seen strolling about the Court stable-yard with Lord Lufton. "Where is Grantly?" asked the vicar. "I don't know where he is," said his lordship. "He has sloped off somewhere." The major had sloped off to the parsonage, well knowing in what nest his dove was lying hid; and he and the vicar had passed each other. The major had gone out at the front gate, and the vicar had gone in at the stable entrance.

The two clergymen had hardly taken their departure when Major Grantly knocked at the parsonage door. He had come so early that Mrs. Robarts had taken no precautions,—even had there been any precautions which she would have thought it right to take. Grace was in the act of coming down the stairs, not having heard the knock at the door, and thus she found her lover in the hall. He had asked, of course, for Mrs. Robarts, and thus they two entered the drawing-room together. They had not had time to speak when the servant opened the drawing-room door to announce the visitor. There had been no word spoken between Mrs. Robarts and Grace about Major Grantly, but the mother had told the daughter of what she had said to Mrs. Robarts.

"Grace," said the major, "I am so glad to find you!" Then he turned to Mrs. Robarts with his open hand. "You won't take it uncivil of me if I say that my visit is not entirely to yourself? I think I may take upon myself to say that I and Miss Crawley are old friends. May I not?"

Grace could not answer a word. "Mrs. Crawley told me that you had known her at Silverbridge," said

Mrs. Robarts, driven to say something, but feeling that she was blundering.

"I came over to Framley yesterday because I heard that she was here. Am I wrong to come up here to see her?"

"I think she must answer that for herself, Major Grantly."

"Am I wrong, Grace?" Grace thought that he was the finest gentleman and the noblest lover that had ever shown his devotion to a woman, and was stirred by a mighty resolve that if it ever should be in her power to reward him after any fashion, she would pour out the reward with a very full hand indeed. But what was she to say on the present moment? "Am I wrong, Grace?" he said, repeating his question with so much emphasis that she was positively driven to answer it.

"I do not think you are wrong at all. How can I say you are wrong when you are so good? If I could be your servant I would serve you. But I can be nothing to you, because of papa's disgrace. Dear Mrs. Robarts, I cannot stay. You must answer him for me." And having thus made her speech she escaped from the room.

It may suffice to say further now that the major did not see Grace again during that visit at Framley.

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